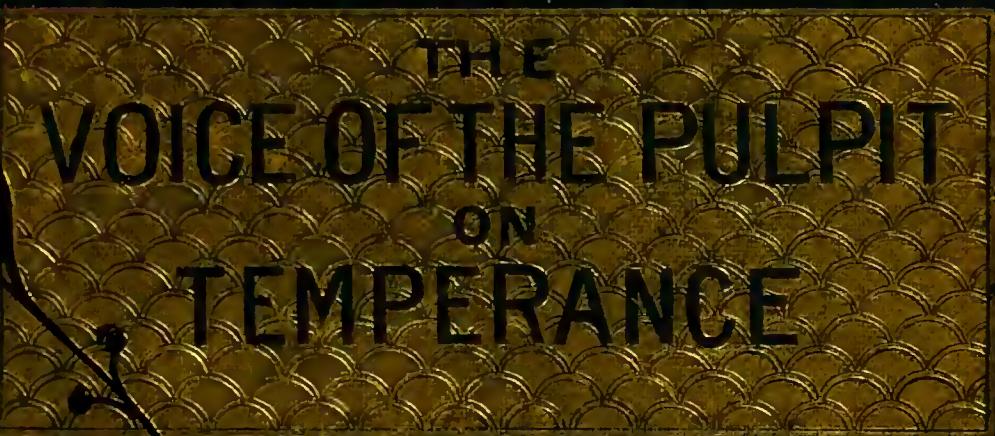


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THE VOW OF THE RECHABITES.

Jer. xxxv., part of 5, 6—"And I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever."

INTERTWINED with the history of Israel is that of a wild and independent tribe of Kenites, descended from Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. When the western Israelites abandoned the roving Arab life to settle in the cities of Canaan, the Kenites still retained their pastoral habits. One of the characteristics which we trace in their history was a fierce resentment against oppression and idolatry. It was a Kenite woman, Jael, who smote Sisera even in her own tent. It was a Kenite Sheikh, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, who washed his fierce hands in the blood of Baal's worshippers and Ahab's house.

The free and eager air of the desert had passed into their lives; and, compared with the settled Jews, they were as the Bedoween to the Fellaheen of modern Palestine. And this fierce and hardy life was so dear to them, that they determined never to abandon it;—

strengthened in their resolve when they saw the nations amongst whom they lived degenerating more and more into luxury and corruption. The son of Rechab would never have mounted with Jehu into his chariot, and joined in massacre after massacre to show his zeal for the Lord, if he had not long observed how the subtle intoxication of Phœnician art and Phœnician morals was passing like poison into the blood of the Northern Kingdoms; how the whoredoms of Jezebel, and her witchcrafts at once fascinated and depraved a God-forgetting race; how the weak and uxorious Ahab was gilding with royal favour the legalised abominations of Baalim and Ashtaroth. And it was the grief and indignation at such growing wickedness which found its wiser outcome in this everlasting interdict which he laid upon his descendants, that they should drink no wine, and sow no corn, and dwell in no houses, and so keep themselves uncontaminated from the effeminacy which otherwise, like a creeping paralysis, might taint their healthful blood.

It is an incident from the life of these descendants, more than two centuries afterwards, which occupies the first lesson of this evening's service.

The gradual and victorious approach of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians had alarmed all Judea. At last the battle of Carchemish had made him master of the advances to the country, and, in alarm lest they should be trampled on by his triumphant progress, these children of the desert were forced for a time into what

to them was the odious shelter of a walled city. And here, while they were fretting for the old free life, their black tents, pitched in the open spaces of Jerusalem, became centres of curious observation. Amid a population given to excess and gluttony, it was natural that their total abstinence should attract special attention, and Jeremiah received a Divine intimation to teach from their obedience an eternal lesson.

Inviting these rude and faithful Bedoween into a chamber of the Temple, he gave them the invitation to which the bold wassailers of his nation would so heartily have responded, “Drink ye wine.” But the Rechabites were not to be tempted. They had adopted the hereditary law of temperance on the bidding of a mighty ancestor, as a protection against the temptations of cities. They continued it because conscience approved, and health rewarded a noble choice. Had they broken their rule once, they well knew that the tendency would be to break it twice and thrice; and that if they broke it at the bidding of social complaisance, some at least of their number might soon be led to break it at the bidding of personal temptation. Plainly, therefore, and bluntly came the answer, “We will drink no wine; for Jonadab, the son of Rechab, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever.”

Admiring their high and unshaken resolve, the prophet sadly and indignantly contrasted their perfect obedience to this single injunction of their father, with

the perpetual disobedience—the persistent defiance of Israel to God's repeated encouragements and reiterated laws ; and he was then commissioned to pronounce a judgment on his sinful countrymen, and the blessing of God's approval on the whole house of Jonadab the son of Rechab for ever.

You will see then, at once, that God distinctly sanctioned, emphatically rewarded, this vow which the Rechabites had made as a living protest against the sins and perils of a corrupt and evil age ; and you will see at once the subject which it forces upon our notice. I have not chosen that subject ; I have not even desired it. It is thrust upon us by the lesson for the day ; and since it is thus thrust upon us, I ask your attention to it as Christians, as citizens, as men. Let no one think that the subject does not concern him. It concerns the most temperate hardly less than the most intemperate. It concerns both men and women, both old and young. It affects all who are not utterly absorbed in selfishness ; all who have the interests of the nation and their race at heart. And in speaking of it I shall make no disputable statement ; I shall use no exaggerated expression ; I shall indulge in no rhetorical amplitude ; I shall wilfully offend no reasonable prejudice. I shall use, God helping me, the language which, however dark the colouring that facts may lend to it, is yet the language of absolute soberness and simple truth ; but here, in this central city of the world's greatest kingdom—here, in this abbey, connected by so many cen-

turies with all that England boasts of worthiest and best—I will ask, nay, I will claim, in the name of God and your country, your calm, solemn, unbiassed attention, to conditions which it is sinful to neglect and selfish to ignore. And if there be any here whose interests seem to be imperilled, whose prejudices are already in arms, it is their attention most of all that—and not with language of unsympathy, not in the tone of denunciation, but as a friend, and as a minister of God, in all brotherly kindness, and with all consideration and courtesy—I would most earnestly desire.

Is there not then, I would ask you, some special, some national need in the circumstances of this age, that we should take well to heart the vow and example recorded in this evening's lesson? If I were to tell you that there is, in the British Isles, a Being into whose treasuries are annually poured in unproductive consumption more than 140 millions of our national wealth; whose actions crush year by year more victims than have been crushed for centuries together by the car of Juggernaut; whose unchecked power causes year by year horrors incomparably more multitudinous than those which have recently thrilled our souls with pity and indignation; if I were to say that the services wrought by this Being were, if any at all, which is an open question, yet almost valueless in kind, and infinitesimal in extent, while on the other hand, the direct admitted indisputable miseries he inflicts were terrible in virulence and vast in ramification; if I were to say

that at his right hand and his left, as eager and ever-active ministers, stood idiocy and pauperism, degradation, and brutality ; and at that point you were all to rise up at once and cry aloud, “Tell us the name of this Being, that we may drive him with execration from the midst of us, and that every one of us may be a Jehu and a Jonadab, to extirpate his power and expel his polluting footsteps from our soil ;” and I were to say that, far from doing this, we all as a nation, and nearly all of us as individuals, crown him with garlands, honour him with social customs, introduce him into gladdest gatherings, sing songs in his glory, build myriads of temples to his service, familiarise our very children with his fame and praise ; were I to say this, then, sentence by sentence, clause by clause, word by word, it would be literally true, not of a man, but of a thing, and that thing INTOXICATING DRINK !

The devotion to it, as every one knows who knows anything about his country, is the besetting sin of the nation ; and, so far from trying to check this besetting sin, we encourage, we render attractive, we protect, we indefinitely multiply, we thrust at every step before those whom it is most likely to destroy, innumerable temptations to it ; and this we do, and continue to do, though we know that so difficult is it for the poor, even when they wish to keep aloof from it ; so subtle, rapid, fatal, enslaving, is the horrible fascination of it, that a man often becomes a drunkard almost before he sees the awfulness of his peril ; and when once he is a

drunkard, most often he is hurried all down hill with fatal rapidity into incurable ruin of body, mind, and soul. Can we then wonder that, more and more, by common confession (a confession, alas ! how humiliating, of a fact how notorious) the national vice of Great Britain is drunkenness ? Not one day passes without our witnessing its terrible ravages. To the ruin it engenders, all alike bear witness. From the Army, from the Navy, from great cities, from country villages, from the police, from guardians of the poor, from manufacturers, from merchants, from all large employers of labour, from physicians, from judges, from the clergy of every denomination, and most often and most bitterly from the working men themselves, come pouring in the accumulated testimonies—emphatic, heart-rending, unmistakable, reiterated—to the prevalence, to the increase, to the deadliness of this degrading sin. Do you who are rich and respectable—you who, shut up in your stately houses or quiet homes, know nothing of this, and therefore, nursing in some delicious stillness your dainty loves and slothful sympathies, hear it with indifference or impatience ? If you would know what drunkenness is, if you would learn what cause there is to lift up the voice respecting it, leave your ease ; do not be afraid for once to sicken your sensibilities ; do not be afraid to soil your robes. See women, or what had once been those gracious beings, shrieking, fighting, blaspheming, pawning the very shawls off their backs, and the very bed on which their children lie. Watch

the poor, ragged, emaciated drunkard,—lost to health, lost to respectability, lost to shame—reeling from the counter where he has over and over again shamefully squandered what might have kept himself and his family in comfort and independence. Follow him, at least in imagination, to the chronic and squalid misery of that bare, foul room, which might have been a home. See his children fly from him terror-stricken, and huddle away out of sight in the corner, in the street, anywhere. See his wife—but the picture, though infinitely less than the reality, is too horrible; and you may see this almost anywhere; you may see it almost any day; and when you have seen it you will know at last why the hearts of thousands sink within them as they contemplate this standing shame, this clinging curse, this eating canker of our prosperity and of our life.

For one moment, as briefly as possible, let us merely glance at the results of this destroying sin. First, there is *waste*. This is the very least of its evils, yet you may estimate what it is when you hear that this vast unproductive drain on the national resources would in a few years pay the whole National Debt. There is *physical degeneracy*, making the lives of myriads a burden, defacing the proud image of God into that of wretches with blear eyes, shattered nerves, and palsied limbs. There is *pauperism*—pauperism which, owing to this potent and blighting sorcery, does but drag down the working classes by the very efforts, the shortened

hours, the higher wages, intended for their improvement. There is *disease* in every form of shattering accident, and raving delirium, and sudden death. There is *brutal violence*.

“When the vitriol madness flashes up in the ruffian’s brain,
And the filthy by-lane rings with the yell of his trampled wife.”

There is the powerlessness of the Church to counteract the frenzying temptation of the gin-shop. There is the frustration of effort after effort to ameliorate the condition of the poor. There is the neutralisation of mission after mission by the imitated vices which make savage nations melt before our imported fire-water as before a demon’s breath. There is the transmitted anguish, handed down from generation to generation, in tainted constitutions and fatal instincts to the drunkard’s child. This, then, is what alcohol does.

These are its infamous results—parent of evil. Who will venture to deny one of these awful indictments with which I here arraign it? Unnecessary as it is, except possibly in rarest cases of illness, being neither a food nor a source of strength, it wastes our resources ; it saps our national strength ; it empties our churches ; it frustrates our schools ; it fills our prisons ; it crowds the wards of our hospitals ; it peoples the cells of our asylums ; it swells the tables of our mortality ; it degrades many of our rich ; it brutalizes multitudes of our poor.

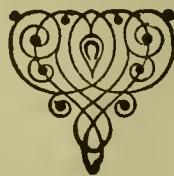
Blasting our prosperity at home ; mocking our efforts abroad, it makes our influence for evil as marked as our

influence for good. It empoisons our national present ; and imperils our national future. The Spartans made their Helots drunk to warn their children from a dangerous vice by a degrading spectacle ; and there is anguish in the thought that we, the sons of free, proud England, are rapidly, by this temptation, degrading ourselves into that which from this pulpit we once were called—the Helots of the world.

Now, all this being so, what will you do ? Oh, I do believe that there are thousands of good men and good women who, if they knew about this subject all they might know, would at least *not* do certain things. They would not look on coldly and indifferently while others struggle. They would not think the drunkard a fit subject for a smile or jest. They would not oppose any legislative endeavour to diminish for the working man his worst and fatalest seduction. They would not meet the arguments of temperance by those feeble superstitious and exploded fashions of Scriptural reasoning which have been used ere now to kindle the fagot of the inquisitor, and rivet the fetter of the slave. They would not supply to the cause of intemperance the shallow sophism or the ensnaring epigram. But what they would do would be to join hand in hand in a holy crusade against this curse of nations ; this worst stumbling-block on the path of moral, intellectual, and religious progress. And if they did not see their way to do, as a simple and much-needed protest what thousands, thank God, of our clergy have done (and have

done not only without injury to health, but with positive advantage to it—not only without diminution of strength, but with decided increase of it), namely, abstain from all intoxicating drinks for their brethren's sake, if not for their own ; if they did not make this cheap and beneficial sacrifice, yet at least, in order that the next generation may be partially delivered from that which is the bitter curse of this, they would train up their children, when any fermented liquor is set before them, to say with the children of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, “ We drink it not, for our father commanded us, saying, ‘ Drink it not.’ ” Oh, what a generation would that be, how healthy, how wealthy, how clear of intellect, how strong of arm, how fertile in resources, how rich in hope, to which drink would be unknown ! The blessing to Jonadab the son of Rechab was that he should not want a man to stand before God for ever ; and if as a nation we continue in this sin unchecked, if the more we earn the more we see the people saturating soul and body with this destructive liquid fire, what shall, what must, be the curse to us ? Shall it not, must it not be that on the walls of the banquet houses of our luxury, shall come forth the fingers of a man's hand and write, “ *Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin,* ” “ Numbered, numbered, weighed and they shall divide ? ” Must it not be that for us, as for the drunkards of Ephraim, our glorious beauty shall be a fading flower ; that our pleasant vices shall be made an instrument to punish us ; that the sceptre of our im-

perial dominion shall drop out of the nerveless grasp which our selfishness has relaxed ; that the crown shall fall from our heads, for we have sinned ? Which fate, the fate—because of their sins—of so many sinful nations before us, on our repentance, may God avert ! But if we repent not, then as Assyria fell for her pride, and Babylon for her cruelty, and Persia for her effemiancy, and Athens for her lust, and Spain for her avarice ; so, in her turn, must England fall for her drunkenness ; and the axe is in the air, and the fiat shall go forth ; “A good tree bringeth not forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”



THE GIANT WITH THE THREE HEADS.

WE have to do with a most gigantic evil, but we are apt to lose anything like an adequate conception of its proportions in the magnitude of the figures which are continually repeated concerning it. We say that so many millions of dollars are annually spent on strong drink, and that so many every year descend into drunkards' graves, and we have a vague idea of some tremendous evil ; but when we bring it nearer ourselves, then we have a very much stronger and a very much more real sense of its terror. I wonder how many families there are here represented to-night that have not been scorched, that have not had their peace destroyed, that have not had their hearts well-nigh broken, by reason of this tremendous evil of intemperance ! Oh ! it is when we come to look at this in its domestic aspects that we get the most vivid idea of the reality of the evil ; and when we come to multiply our individual cases myriadfold, then we come to have something like a right idea of what we have to contend with. The giant is three-headed. We have to do battle with appetite, with fashion, and with interest. Either of these alone would be bad enough, but when they are all three put together it is tremendous.

We have to grapple with Appetite. Oh ! who can describe the force of the drunkard's appetite ? Not anybody that has not felt it. And we all recognise, just as he recognises, that there is no remedy whatever

for him but absolute and entire abstinence. It is a physical disease as well as a moral evil. His use of this alcohol has so affected his frame that the first drop of poison immediately inflames his appetite and sets it ablaze with a consuming thirst for more. He knows, and you know, and I know, that there is no possibility of salvation for him but in total abstinence. And if there should have come into this meeting to-night, seeking a way of deliverance, any one who is conscious of his slavery to this tremendous evil, let me beseech him to lay that thought well to heart — your only safety, my friend, is in absolute abstinence, and you cannot hope for deliverance by making the abstinence gradual. It must be immediate. Have you ever sat upon a rock in front of the advancing tide, and gazed upon wave after wave dashing at your feet, and then have you attempted to amuse yourself by striking limpets from the rock? You have seen that a little touch only made it fix itself firmly and immovably upon the surface of the rock, and you learned that just when you struck quickly and decisively you sent it away from its hold. Even so it is with this appetite. You need never hope to deliver yourself from its bondage by any gradual stages. Your abstinence must be immediate and entire. Rise, then, in the might of your manhood, and by the supplicated help of God's Holy Spirit snap asunder the bonds wherewith your enemy has bound you. Oh! see to it that you be not lured back again to its Delilah lap, for in the end it will worm out at length the secret of your strength, and send you to grind in ceaseless misery, a continual slave. I make my appeal now to my Christian friend, and I say to him: You see and admit with me that abstinence is the

only hope for the drunkard. Well, then, are you going to let him abstain alone? Have you no duty to discharge in regard to him? Or, rather, shall I not put it from a much more Christian standpoint when I say: Is there no privilege of yours in reference to him? Are you going to let him stand alone? Oh! how much power there is in sympathy, the loving grasp of a friendly hand. You stand back from him and say: "Yes, you must abstain; go and do it." It takes a very strong will to abstain in such circumstances; but if you say, "Come, I will abstain along with you, and if anybody throws reproach at you he will do it equally at me," then he will be encouraged to take his place by your side. If one fall, his neighbour can help him up, but woe to him who is alone when he falleth. And so, if one abstains, he is in greater danger as long as he remains alone; but if you encircle him with other abstainers he feels that their strength, in a large degree, comes into his. Hugh Miller, in his "Schools and Schoolmasters," a most interesting and very helpful book to all working-men, although he was not himself a total abstainer, tells that when he was working among a lot of masons in the neighbourhood of Haddington, he noticed how the *esprit de corps*, as he called it, of the total abstainers helped each other up. He saw and acknowledged its value; he saw that the weakness of the weak was strengthened by the strength of the strong. Moreover, he saw the power that was in human sympathy. Oh! how much there is in that. You remember how the Lord Jesus healed the leprosy of the poor diseased one. He did not say: "Stand off, you are unclean." No; but He did a new thing in Israel. He touched the leper, and was not Himself thereby defiled, but rather thereby

He gave His own purity to the diseased one—aye, and did as much good to the soul of the diseased one by that touch as He did to his body ; for I can imagine how he said within himself : “ Here is one, and He the holiest and most loving of all, who is not afraid to touch me.” So if you stand side by side with the drunkard that is abstaining, and abstain for his sake and with him, you give him a thrill of joy and delight which is to him as strength. Always when he is assailed by his adversary he can lay hold of you, and feel, in the grasp of your loving hand, the assurance that his Father, God, has still hold of him.

And so it is that I make my appeal to the Christian friends and say : “ Now, come and abstain for the sake of the drunkards.” I will have no argument with you to-night whether you have a right abstractly to take wine or not. I will have no argument as to whether it is a sin *per se* or not to take a glass of wine. We have not to do with things *per se*; we have to do with them in the concrete and not in the abstract. And the Apostle Paul has laid down the principle that our liberty is conditioned by the effect which our conduct will have upon those who are round about us ; so he said : “ If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands.” Equally I ask you, for the sake of your weak brother, to drink no wine while the world stands ; for over and through your abstinence he is to be reformed.

Now, this is the appeal I make to you, feeling it is an appeal appropriate to the house in which we are assembled, and to the place in which I stand. You say to me : “ What is the drunkard to me, that I should do this for him ? ” I say to you, Remember what the first murderer asked : “ Am I my brother’s keeper ? ” Are

you going to put yourself in the same category with him? The drunkard is your neighbour; the drunkard is your brother man, wearing the nature which Christ dignified with His incarnation, and the value of which Christ paid down in the precious drops of His own priceless blood. With these facts before you, will you say: "What is the drunkard to me, that I should do anything for him?"

But even if you are unmoved by an appeal like that, remember that we are all members of the same body, and that in the suffering of one, all suffer. You cannot separate yourself from him. Whether you will have it so or no, his conduct and his character must have an influence ultimately upon you. You have heard the story of Sir Robert Peel's daughter. Her birthday was coming, and the great statesman (for he was very fond of his only daughter) went himself to a house in the West End of London, and ordered for her a magnificent riding-habit. It came home on her birthday morning. She went out with it on, and rode with him through Hyde Park, and it was difficult to say which of them was the prouder. But by and by that fair young lady sickened of malignant typhus fever and died. Then an inquiry came to be made how the infection could have been produced, and it was discovered that the magnificent riding-habit was made in an attic away in the far east of London, and that the seamstress had used it to cover her husband in his shivering fits while he lay in typhus fever; and so the mystery was solved. Thus the extreme east and the extreme west of London were seen to hang together. And so the prosperity and the welfare of the richest, depend in every community upon the character and condition of the poorest; and it will be fatal to us as a community and as families, if we

wrap ourselves up in selfishness and say : “ What is the drunkard to us, that we should abstain for his sake ? ” But I cannot conceive of anybody taking any such position who calls himself by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think of what He has done for us ; and after He has laid down His life for us, is it a great thing for us to lay down our glass for the brethren, for the salvation of those who are beneath us ? Oh ! it cannot be that any one who owns the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ over him can feel in such a way as that. Some one hundred years ago, in Scotland, it was the custom of the farmers to take the grain to the mill, not in wheel-carts—for they had hardly any in those days—but in sacks, which they laid over the horse’s back. My grandfather (and I have heard my father tell the story very often) was taking a sack of grain to the mill in this way. The pathway was very rough and rugged, and the horse gave a stumble and the sack fell to the ground. He was an old man then, threescore years and ten. He could not lift it, but he saw in the distance a gentleman on horseback. He thought perhaps he would help him. By and by, as he drew near, he recognised him as a nobleman who lived in a castle not far away. He thought, “ I cannot ask him ; ” but he was a nobleman in nature as well as in name. As he came up he dismounted, and said : “ Here, John, let me help you.” So he took the head of the sack, and John the foot, and between them they put it on the horse’s back. Then grandfather took his broad Kilmarnock bonnet from his head, and said : “ Please your lordship, how shall I ever thank you for all that ? ” “ Very easily,” was the reply ; “ whenever you see a poor man needing

your help as much as you were needing mine just now, help him, and that will be thanking me." Now for the application. You stand before the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you say, and you think you mean it too, "What shall I render unto Thee for all Thy benefits toward me?" and the Lord says, "There is a poor drunkard; help him, and that will be thanking me." And you won't help him, even to the giving up of your glass, and yet call yourselves by the name of the Lord Jesus! It won't do, brethren, it won't do!

Now, the other head of this giant is Fashion. You know what the influence of fashion is. I do not believe there is another power in the world that would make us men submit to the wearing of those chimney-pots of hats, but fashion; and I do not know what it is if it is not fashion that makes the ladies submit to the wearing of things—well, shall I say suspended or elevated, now, upon their heads? I cannot tell. These are small things, and things of little importance, but they illustrate the power of that subtle thing which we call fashion. And when you have fashion enlisted in this cause of drunkenness, you can easily see how much its force must be. In point of fact, to a large extent, it is the existence of the drinking customs that is responsible for the manufacture of drunkards. Take away strong drink from its place on our sideboards and take it away from our public entertainments, and you will very soon take it away from the tables of our working-men—you will very soon take it away from the homes of those who are at the other extremity of society. Fashion is responsible for the manufacture of drunkards. Well, now, lead men who are maintaining that fashion to stop it. I want to advertise out of that fashion.

When a firm is doing questionable things, and if I am a member of the firm, I want to advertise out of it, and let it be known that I am no longer responsible for it. And so, in regard to this fashion, I want to advertise out of it, and say: "Whoever is responsible after this for the manufacture of drunkards, I do not want to be; therefore I put my name down." But you say: "I do not like pledges." That is a very common saying among those who are Christian men. I cannot understand it. What is there about this pledge that men do not like? Now, I see a goodly number of young people in the galleries and down below, of both sexes. I wonder what they would say if, when two of them presented themselves before a clergyman on an interesting occasion, he said: "Wilt thou have So-and-so to be thy wedded husband?" and the reply were made: "I do not like pledges." But what difference is there in the one case and in the other? Suppose you have this [here Dr. Taylor exhibited a greenback], "The United States will pay bearer one dollar." Well, it is a very good pledge, if only kept. Does anybody refuse to take that pledge? By no means. And there are men of business here who are signing pledges every day—and I hope they keep them, too—in the shape of bills. What, then, is there about this pledge that is so terrible, when men are taking pledges every day in regard to other things? I tell you what it is, there is not so much wrong with the pledge, but they like the glass; that is it.

Well, now, the third head of this giant is Interest. What an enormous interest the drink-traffic has built up! They say in England, and with truth, that the drink-interest can turn an election over the country any

day. I do not know but that it is true here too. The power of it is tremendous. I am afraid to put an estimate upon how much money is sunk in it. And yet see how the law deals with it. You know that scene in "Pilgrim's Progress"; it has a very beautiful spiritual meaning, and I am almost ashamed to take it out of its connection for the purpose for which I mean to employ it. You remember when Christian is in the house of Interpreter, and he sees a great blazing fire, and there are men trying all they can to put it out, but it blazes on in spite of all their efforts. He cannot understand it; but Interpreter takes him round to the other side of the wall, where men are pouring in the oil, and then the whole thing is plain. That has a wonderful significance in the spiritual life; but do you not see the application of it here? Here are the licenses issued continually year by year for men to keep the fire up. Is it any wonder, therefore, that policemen, city missionaries, Bible-women, Scripture-readers, and national temperance societies should all be frustrated in their attempts to put it out? Here we are all labouring to put out the fire, and the licensing principle is doing everything it can to pour oil upon it and keep it up. And the worst of it is, that the people love to have it so. The people think it is a grand thing to get that licensing money to support the public charities. How long is this anomaly and inconsistency to continue in the midst of us? As long as the people permit it, and no longer. The responsibility is yours.

Now here comes in the question of legislation, I have no faith in legislation merely as such. A law is not anything if it is not enforced, and you cannot have a law enforced unless there is a public sentiment to back it. Law rests, and can only rest, on

public sentiment. We had a landing-stage in Liverpool that they were very proud of. It rose and fell with the tide, and the hinge, as it were, which connected it with the land was a bridge between the land and itself. At low tide it was low, at high tide it was high ; it always had the same relative position to the deck of the ship. Now, just like that landing-stage must all legislation be. It rises and falls with public opinion, and it is not worth anything if you have not a public opinion to support it. Indeed, there are few worse things you can do in regard to any social improvement of the community, than to go far ahead of public opinion in legislation. They tried that in England with the Wilson-Patten bill for Sunday-closing, and the consequence was a riot in London, and the immediate repeal of the bill, which put it back for years, so that they have not Sunday-closing yet. Therefore I judge it to be foolish to go far in advance of public opinion. What we have to do in the matter of legislation is, when the public opinion has forced the wheel on to a certain point, to put a ratchet in and hold the wheel there so as to keep it ; and the temperance reformers will be wise in their generation when they just watch where the wheel goes and put the ratchet in, so that no steps shall be taken backwards, but that they will keep all they get. Now, in these days there is opportunity for us all. Some people say hard things about us. We can afford to have them said. Friends for whom we have the highest regard blame us, we think in their ignorance, but we will forget all that. We will go with them their one mile, heartily and sincerely, and by the time we get to the end of that one mile we think we will find they are ready to go with us our second. That

is the way to do it—in mutual brotherhood and in love, with mutual consideration for each other. Let there be no quarrelling among us. If one should call another hard names, let him put up with it for the sake of the great reform in which we are all engaged. An objection of this kind is frequently made: “Haven’t you the Gospel? Is not that enough? Why should you have a new society for the promotion of temperance?” Well, I love the Gospel. When I forget to be loyal to the Gospel and the Gospel’s Lord, may my right hand forget its cunning and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth! But it is because I love the Gospel that I love this cause. Temperance sometimes goes before the Gospel to prepare its way, like John the Baptist saying: “Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make His paths straight.” A wonderfully interesting illustration came to me the other day from Japan. A minister’s son—a Scotchman, too—called upon me a week or two ago just in the course of transit from his Japan home. He told me that he had been engaged in working in Yokohama, in the Young Men’s Christian Association there, principally for the benefit of the foreigners in Yokohama, who were, he thought, fully worse than they were at home, although he was interested in all missionary movements. One day there came down from Ouida, a place beyond the city limits, in which no foreign missionaries are permitted to labour, a commissioner, who wanted to inquire into Christianity, to see what it was, and whether it would not be good for the people about him. He went to a great many Christian meetings, but he did not seem to get hold of it. Going along the street with a friend, he saw on a sign the words “Temperance Union” in English, and

the same words in Japanese. "What is that?" he inquired. They went in, and he said, "This is something I can make use of"; and he learned all about it. He got all the tracts and things they had; he said: "Our people need just as much to be kept from intemperance as yours." He went to Ouida and began to work in the temperance reform. He said to himself: "We haven't got to the bottom of this yet; there is something beneath all this; this must be the effect of a cause that is stronger than itself. I will go back again to Yokohama and find it out." And he did find it out. He became a Christian and took a native teacher back with him; and when my friend left, there was out of that Temperance Union a native church of between forty and fifty members existing in Ouida. There you see how temperance goes before the Gospel. Very frequently temperance goes after the Gospel, lifting up its train. You will see that, in the case of those who, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, are earnestly labouring to lift up the degraded and to do their best to reclaim the drunkard. It is because we are Christians that we are earnest in this work. Indeed, I cannot conceive how any one can read the parable of the Good Samaritan or study the argument of the apostle in the fourteenth of Romans and the tenth of First Corinthians without seeing underlying it all, the principle of sacrificing that which I may have the liberty of doing, for the sake of doing good to my poor brother who cannot exercise that liberty without stumbling. You remember how David, with one of those fits of home-sickness which seemed to have come over him occasionally, thirsted for a draught from the well of Bethlehem, at which, as a shepherd boy, he used to

drink. There were those around him of his chief captains to whom his every wish was law, and they, ere he could say them "nay," dashed away from him through the opposing ranks of the Philistines and brought back a pitcher of the precious water. But he would not drink it; he poured it out before the Lord, for men risked their lives to get it for him. So when you lift the glass and think of the multitudes whose lives for time and whose souls for eternity are being endangered by that deceitful beverage, I want you, David-like, to pour it out before the Lord ; and believe me, He who poured out His precious blood for you and me, will count it no vain sacrifice.

ABSTINENCE FROM EVIL.

"ABSTAIN from all appearance of evil." The true meaning of this verse is, "Abstain from every form or kind of evil;" yet, though the other reading be erroneous, it gives us a very noble meaning. It is narrated of two Jewish patriots—Pappus, and his brother Julian—that, knowing their firm resolve not to drink Pagan wine lest they should seem to sanction idolatry, Rufus, the Roman Governor, ordered water to be served to them, but in glasses so coloured that it should look to the multitude as though they were drinking wine. Seeing at once the object of the deception, they sternly refused the water, and faced death by terrible martyrdom rather than taste it. This was a noble spirit; it is one more of the many illustrations from the lives of the truly brave and heroically good, that they will not only refuse to do wrong—will not only say with Joseph, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"—but that they will not even suffer it to be imagined that they countenance wrong, when their actual conduct is right. The duty of this absolute aloofness from evil is taught even by heathen morality. "In a field of melons," says the Chinese proverb, "do not stoop to tie your shoe"; "under a plum tree do not adjust your cap";—in both instances for the same reason—lest you should even seem to wish to steal. And the principle that underlies these precepts and examples is the great principle of Scripture, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good;" "Enter not into the path of the

wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away."

I have been asked to speak to you, my brethren, on the subject of Temperance, and I desire simply and humbly to fulfil that duty. Were it not that the kindness of others in this great city has laid on me burdens somewhat beyond my strength, I might have spoken more worthily than I now can do. But in the endeavour to perform such small good as God may place in our power, it is a duty not to shrink from effort, and not at all to care for self. Now, I would ask you, my friends, not to think of the speaker, or his imperfections, but simply and solely whether what he says be true. And if it be true, suffer not the poor personalities of criticism to hover at the church door, like fowls of the air, to take away the good seed from your hearts. The inspiration that comes from heaven, remember, is often subjective, not objective; it is in the glow of the hearer's heart, not in the fire of the speaker's lips. God, indeed, sends forth His seraphim to touch, with a living coal from the altar, the mouth of whom He will. But when it is to Israel that he speaks, Moses may not be eloquent, yet he utters the fiery law; and because their own hearts are faithful they feel that there is the palpitating splendour behind his shrouding veil. So be it with us.

"Lord, grant us this abiding grace.

Thy word and saints to know;

To pierce the veil on Moses' face,

Although his speech be slow."

And though I am bidden to speak to you about Temperance, the point of view from which I shall speak is that of total abstinence. It is, I know, the unpopular view, the deprecated view, the despised view. By taking it I rank myself among those of whom some speak as unpractical bigots and ignorant

fanatics. But, because I believe it in the present need to be the only effective remedy for an otherwise hopeless evil, therefore I take it undeterred. Public opinion, my brethren, is a grand power. It is a mighty engine for good if we can array it on our side. He who despises it must be either more or less than man ; he must be puffed up by a conceit which mars his usefulness, or he must be too abject to be reached by scorn. He, therefore, that affects to despise public opinion, stands self-condemned ; but yet public opinion has, many a time, been arrayed on the side of wrong ; and he who is not afraid to brave it in defence of righteousness —he who, in a cause which he knows to be good, but which his fellow-men do not yet understand, is willing to be ranked among the idiots and fools—*he* is a partaker with all those who, through faith and patience, have inherited the promises. It was thus—it was for the cause of scientific truth—that Roger Bacon bore his long imprisonment, and Galileo sat contented in his cell ; it was thus—it was for the cause of religious truth—that Luther stood undaunted before kings ; it was thus that, to wake the base slumbers of a greedy age, Wesley and Whitfield were content to

“Stand pilloried on infamy’s high stage,
And bear the pelting scorn of half an age.”

It was thus that Wilberforce faced in Parliament the sneers and rage of wealthy slave-owners ; it was thus, “in the teeth of clenched antagonisms,” that education was established, that missions were founded, that the cause of religious liberty was won. The persecuted abject of to-day is the saint and exemplar of to-morrow. St. John enters the thronged streets of the capital of Asia as a despised Galilean and an unnoticed exile ; but, when generations have passed away, it is still *his* name which clings to its indistinguish-

able ruins. St. Paul stands, in his ragged gaberdine, too mean for Gallio's supreme contempt; but to-day the cathedral dedicated to his honour towers over the vast imperial city where the name of Gallio is not so much as heard. "Count we over the chosen heroes of this earth," says a great orator, "and I will show you the men who stood alone, while those for whom they toiled and agonised poured on them contumely and scorn. They were glorious iconoclasts, sent out to break down the Dagons worshipped by their fathers. The very martyrs of yesterday, who were hooted at, whom the mob reviled and expatriated; to-day, the children of the very generation who mobbed and reviled them are gathering up their scattered ashes to deposit them in the golden urn of their nation's history!"

Not for one moment do I pretend, my brethren, that if you adopt this cause you will need any heroism, any great self-abnegation, any extraordinary sacrifice, or that you will have anything worth speaking of to bear in avouching it. But the principle is the same. If, to help your fellows, you were bidden do some great thing, and you would do it, how much more when you are merely asked to abandon a needless, a trivial, and—unless a mass of strong evidence be disproved—a deleterious indulgence? The time when abstainers were persecuted has passed away. Milton, in his day, thinks it would be an impossible stretch of generosity for even Puritans to "lose their sack for the certain abolishing of so great a sin;" and who is there, he asks, the holiest, "who less loves his rich canary at meals, though it be fetched from places that hazard the religion of them that fetch it, and though it makes his neighbour drunk, out of the same tun?" Howard—the illustrious John Howard—who has left his name like a beacon-fire on the hills of Christian self-sacrifice, was a total abstainer; yet he shrank so sensitively from ridicule,

that he always ordered the wine which he never drank. Even your illustrious countryman, Thomas Guthrie, went with positive tremor to the table of Lord Jeffreys, in the then despised fanaticism of total abstinence. All *that*, thank God, is, through the labour of good men and of brave men, entirely changed. In the halls of great colleges, at the banquets of illustrious statesmen, at the hospital boards of wealthy nobles, I can thankfully testify that you may now see many a man whose sole drink, like that of Samson, is from the crystal brook. In the upper classes the victory of total abstinence is so far won that it has enforced its own respectful recognition. But they who have achieved that result have not all lived to see it. The army that, under the eye of their great leader, Wellington, crossed the foamy bar of the Bidassoa into France, was not the same army that won his mighty victories in Spain. *They* lay dead on the heights of Busaco, or in the breach of Badajoz. Along the whole line of victorious march were scattered the bones of those who did not live to gaze on hostile France from its barrier mountain slopes, or “to see the spray as it broke in foam on the bar of the Bidassoa.” They were younger men who reaped the laurels of conquest which the brave hands of those dead veterans had sown; but other and yet sterner battles were before them; and who would not have cried shame upon the laggard who, even then, would have shrunk from any suffering in his country’s cause? Even so with you. If you join this holy struggle to ensure a temperance reform, you will not have to endure all that *they* endured who now sleep in their nameless graves; but much has yet to be borne and done, and, if it is ever to be done, it can only be by our enlisting heart and soul into the cause the generation which is to follow in our steps; by flashing into their minds “the epidemic of nobleness,” which shall induce *them* also to use

personal effort, and to make personal sacrifice, to save their brethren and their country, ere, for ever, it be too late.

My brethren, I need not tell you of the horrors caused by drink. The very city in which your lot is cast is under the deadly blight of it. It is asserted, from statistical records, that London is more drunken than Paris, and Liverpool than London, and Glasgow than Liverpool. It is the national vice of England ; and, alas ! it is of Scotland too. Yes, even of Scotland,—the land of exceptional education ; the land of exceptional intelligence ; the land of exceptional patriotism ; the land of exceptional loyalty ; the land of the Covenant and of the Westminster Confession ; the land of John Knox and Andrew Melville ; the land of the Bruce and the Douglas ; the land which was even yesterday the home of Edward Irving, and Thomas Guthrie, and Norman Macleod ; the land whose sons fought at Bannockburn for their country, and at Culloden for their king ; the land where the Sabbath is the pearl of days, and where the Westminster Catechism has borne for centuries its noble witness that the chief end of man is to live for the glory of God, and to enjoy Him for ever hereafter :—Yes, even of this land of sainthood and chivalry, drunkenness, the base and brutal vice of drunkenness, is the national sin ! You know, better than a stranger can tell you, that your land, too, is a victim, an almost helpless victim, to this scathing, debasing, degrading, despicable, but perfectly curable, perfectly remediable, sin.

Why need I tell you of the horrors of drunkenness ? Have you not seen them ? Do you not daily see them with your own eyes ? In your national history does not the wasted figure of Prince Charles Edward rise before you—beautiful no longer, noble no longer, beloved no longer—sinking dishonoured into a drunkard's grave ? In your literary history rises there not before you, with the solemn

agony not yet faded from his noble features, the figure of him

“Who walked in glory and in joy,
Following his plough upon the mountain side,”

to emphasize the warning of another countryman, that “this accursed vice has changed into ashes the laurel crown around the head of genius and—the wings of the poet scorched in its hellfire flames—he who once played in the light of sunbeams has crawled basely in the dust”? Do you not see in your own streets the dramshops there most abounding where the *maximum* of poverty leaves men with the *minimum* of force to resist temptation? Have you not marked its ravages in fallen companions, in deposed ministers, in fair lives blighted as by a Fury’s breath? Have you not heard of mothers cursed by their sons because of it? of husbands and wives beating each other to death because of it? of parents sinking into the grave broken-hearted because of it? of every sanctity of life made, because of it, bankrupt of blessing and prolific of bitterness? Our gaols choked to the door by drink; our asylums crowded by drink with the maniac and the idiot; our churches emptied; our schools defeated; our missions rendered fruitless; our people made poor, diseased, brutal, reckless, wicked, by this inexcusable scandal, this horrible source of degradation and pauperism; is all this nothing? “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?” Unless you have purposely closed your eyes, you *know* these things; and, if you know them, are you a man? are you a Christian? have you a heart? have you any human pity? have you one spark of nobleness left in you, if you can look on them with indifferent acquiescence? And if you are not indifferent, what can you do? Be temperate? My brethren, I should not think that worth saying to you; I should not have been asked to come 400 miles to tell you that. In this particular

struggle, temperance is worth nothing. Temperate ! of course you are temperate, if you be even gentlemen. No Christian, I hope, would feel a spark of pride in saying that he did not know what intoxication was. It is no matter of pride for a man to be able to say that he has not, by greedy drinking, reduced himself to bestial degradation. No ! I come to ask you for something much more. I come to plead with you for a perfect, a certain, a final remedy. I come to ask you to take a stronger part in that struggle which even the calm, wise voice of Richard Cobden told us, years ago, lies at the basis of all moral and social reform. It may not be (we will suppose) your individual duty to take part in this particular effort. I condemn no man. I judge no man. Never against even publicans or gin distillers have I or will I utter a single word. But this I say, that, except by total abstinence, you will in this crisis do no real abiding good. Some of you will be ministers ; many of you are fathers ; many of you are Sabbath-school teachers. If you take your wine, or your whisky, because you like it, or because you think you need it, your people, your sons and daughters, the poor children whom you teach, will do so likewise, and many of them, by a natural, inevitable consequence—a consequence which is purely physical as well as moral in its awful character—will do so to excess ; and say to you,

“ But good, my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Point us the steep and thorny path to heaven,
While, like a puffed and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede ! ”

If you, for your own pleasure, or your own fancied need, will row about above the rapids, you may be thrilled too late by

their shriek of anguish, but think not that they will heed your voice beforehand when it warns them lest they be swept over the leaping cataract. "Then" (in the "Pilgrim's Progress") "Christian called to Demas, saying, 'Is not the place dangerous? hath it not hindered many in their pilgrimage?' 'Not very dangerous,' said Demas, 'except to those that are careless.' *But withal he blushed as he spake.*"

Consider, then, my brethren, whether God calls you or no to help in removing from your country its deadliest curse; but this I say to you, that if He does, you can only do it effectually by being an abstainer. Now those who argue with a man in favour of that which he likes, in favour of a pleasant custom, in favour of a popular practice, argue with him in shorthand; but he who would run counter to vulgar customs, he who is not afraid "to smite the hoary head of inveterate abuse," must be prepared to face at the first stage violence, at the second ridicule, and at the third—for we have already stormed those two redoubts—the heaped fascines of plausible objection. We are told, forsooth, that total abstinence is morose, that it is Manichæan, that it trenches on the province of the baptismal vow, that it invades the true functions of the Church, that it is a violation of Scripture. These cobwebs of miserable sophistry, had time permitted, I would have gladly swept away; but I must conclude, and among many and pressing grounds on which it might well be, if not your direct and positive duty, at least your strength, and your safety, and your honour, to deny yourself an infinitesimal pleasure to further an infinite gain, I would touch, in conclusion, on two alone.

The first is *the blessing and the duty of a simple life.* Our lot has fallen in hard times. We live in a very crowded country. It is a nation of toiling fathers, of crowded professions, of diminished patronage, of abolished sinecures, of portionless

daughters, of sons educated but unemployed. Life has become, for most men, a ceaseless struggle. It is a time of depressed commerce, of stagnating trade, of intensified competition, of glaring contrasts between colossal wealth among the few, and among the many painful struggle and ghastly poverty. Wars are in the air and rumours of wars. There are social problems around us of unequalled gravity ; the growth of population, the relations of capital and labour, the place which England is to hold among the empires of the world. It may be a question whether, in the advance of civilisation, we may not have contracted some of its deadliest vices, and drawn into our veins the virus of its most corrupting luxury. Never, at any rate, considering the battle of life, was it more pressingly incumbent upon young men, even for the sake of their own happiness, to take high labour for their portion ; to be scornfully indifferent of mere luxury ; to reduce life to its simplest elements :—

“ To sit self-governed in the fiery prime
Of youth, obedient at the feet of law.”

It is to such a youth, trained in simplicity, strong in self-conquest, like the Nazarites of old, temperate, and brave, and contented, and full of holy reverence and manly courage, that we look to uphold the ancient honour of this virtuous and godly island ; and the very first and most obvious step in such a simplicity, in such a scorning of self-indulgence, is to abandon that intoxicating drink, which, as science has indisputably proved, is not a necessary food ; and which, if it be not, as I believe, a positive source for most men of sickness and weakness, is not at any rate a source of health or strength ; which weakens the power of the intellect and blunts the sensibilities of the spirit ; which, if there be any evil in us, tends to stir up all the evil, and if there be any

good in us to encarnalise all the good. Granted that it is a pleasure; but it is a pleasure of all the least needful; of all the most dangerous; of all the one which can most easily be superseded by others transcendently more noble. The happy warrior of the future, independent for mirth on a chemical infusion, will desire not a low pleasure, but a rational happiness, and, on the very lowest ground, will scorn to heap up his contribution to that "monstrous pyramid of gold," which a struggling nation, to its own destruction, spends—nay wastes, nay squanders—on the very meanest of animal indulgences.

And, secondly, I will urge upon you *the duty of self-denial for the sake of others*. If you are fond of drink abandon it before it be too late for your own sake; if you are not fond of it, it will cost you nothing to give it up. We are all face to face with a hideous, a degrading, an enormous evil. The Legislature either cannot or will not help us. Warning, preaching, moral influence, even extended education, fails to help us; increased wages, diminished hours of work, only deepen our peril and our loss. There is one way, and one way only—but that is a certain and an easy way—by which, not merely to check, but even to annihilate the curse. It is that every one of us should cease to contribute to this monster evil the penny of a contribution, or the shadow of an example. The use of that deadly, peculiar, and wholly unnecessary substance called alcohol, is so far inseparable from the abuse, that where the individual use is, there the national abuse will be. Unrestricted liquor traffic will, to the end of time, mean for myriads intense temptation; temptation means drunkenness; drunkenness means degradation, horror, ruin, crime. You are a Christian. Will you give up a needless luxury to help in saving others from a blasting curse? You are a patriot. Will you give up a poor tickling of the palate,

an unwholesome tingling of the brain, to rescue your nation from a blighting degradation? If you do not help, at least be ashamed to hinder. Call not those fanatics who would clear their conscience from every taint of so dangerous a leaven. Do not gild a self-indulgence with the Ophir-gold of Holy Scripture, or hide the forehead of a luxury under the phylactery of a scribe. Not long ago there was, in a certain colliery, an explosion, by which 400 miners were suddenly hurled amid shattered ruins into horrible death. It was caused by a single miner who had opened his safety-lamp to light his pipe. To that pipe of tobacco were sacrificed four hundred precious lives of fathers, of husbands, and of sons; and, alas! on the bodies of not a few of those who perished in that fiery blast were found duplicate keys by which, hitherto with impunity, they had done the same. Alas! my brethren, England and Scotland are such a mine; they are full of the explosive fire-damp of intemperance. In all societies it hangs dense around us in the perilous and pestilential air. Do not say that there is none of this flaming peril around you; that you may open your safety-lamp, and no harm come of it. It may be so; it may not be so. You could not, you would not do it, if you were *sure* that there was danger; for that—as you see at once—would be a deadly selfishness and an atrocious crime. But you cannot be sure that there is *not* danger. Is the gain worth the risk? Is the transient and animal indulgence worth the permanent and eternal peril? No harm may come to *you*; but if harm come to others who are reassured by your example, you, even you will, have helped to perpetuate a frightful curse, whose effects, in shattering blast after shattering blast, shall be flapped in echoes of ruin and of misery, too late for penitence, amid generations yet unborn. The fatal, and the fatally common, key of that safety-lamp is what is called “moderate

drinking." If in this particular struggle you would be patriots, if in this matter you would show your true love for your brother-men, fling it away. Like the Nazarites of old, like the children of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, drink neither wine nor strong drink, so long as by it you make weak or cause to stumble, or tempt into ruin and misery, the soul—the priceless soul—of a brother; the soul of your brother FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED.

Do not let us be frightened from the clear imperative path of national duty by the bugbear of violated liberty. The moth is not free which is only free to plunge into the flame. The ship is not free which is only free to run straight upon the iron shore in the fury of the storm, with no hand of the steersman upon her helm. If freedom is to be another name for 99,000 public-houses, for 39,000 beer-shops, for 1,537,656 persons arrested for drunkenness and disorder in ten years, for 100,422 cases of assault in one year, of which 2,736 were "aggravated assaults on women and children," for 16,525 women drunk and disorderly in London alone last year—and if these be but items in the hideous total of such a freedom—if freedom is to hear the wail of myriads of savage hearts, myriads of desolated homes—then, in heaven's name! let us have instead of it the beneficent bondage of virtue, the salutary restraint of Christian legislation; for such bondage is above such liberty.

THE NATIONAL SIN.

“Sound an Alarm.”—Joel ii. 1.

THROUGHOUT the ever-changing ages of the world's history, through all the struggles of human passion, human suffering, and human ignorance, through all the contrasts and inconsistencies which mark the painful puzzle of human life, there is, my brethren, one special voice of God for ever sounding above the tumult—one voice that never wavers and that never changes. It appears at intervals amid the blackness of the world's wickedness, like the lightning-flash on some pitch-dark night, shining through the blackest cloud, and throwing up every minute object into brilliant light, and then again disappearing and leaving darkness all around, and that voice is the voice of the warning of Almighty God against the unchecked spread of a nation's sin. It is true that this voice is rarely heeded : it is true that men will jest and laugh whilst the flashes that precede the fiery shower which will destroy them are flying around their heads : it is true that men will suffer the pleasure, and the turmoil, and the confusion, and the money-getting, of this busy world to shut out the sound of the thunder from their ears ; but that voice is never silent, and it is never untruthful ; and when it is unheeded, those floodgates of the wrath of God are unloosed, before which no nation, no people, can stand. And as it

spake from heaven close upon 3,000 years ago by the mouth of the Prophet Joel, and in the words of my text warned the Israelites of the impending capture and desolation of Jerusalem, so does it echo this very day through the mouth of the ministry of the Christian Church, and to us who feebly fill the prophet's office, from the modern pulpit, Almighty God says, "Sound an alarm." And it is in fulfilment of this plain and irresistible, but ever unpopular mission, that men are to be found in advance of their times, willing to court the supercilious contempt of the unbelieving, and the open hostility of the licentious, by a vigorous public denunciation of sin. Almighty God says: "Sound an alarm." And lo ! the alarm must and shall be sounded, and whether it be in the palace of royalty, or in the cottage of the humble, whether it be the open flagrant violation of the law of God and man, or whether it be the secret cankering leprous sin of the closed door and the hushed voice, if it be but part of the deadly struggle between Christ and Satan, there must be no flinching from the delivering of God's *ultimatum*, which is, "Repent or perish."

And, brethren, what means it, I ask you, that upon this very night one hundred pulpits in and around the city of Manchester—too often, alas ! in these days of division directed against each other—are united in one holy cause ? Why are those whose hands are full enough of work at home gathered in that northern city, determined that they will earn by their labours the reproach which is sure to be freely heaped upon them, that they are "enthusiasts" and "intolerant agitators?" Is it not that they have been awakened to the peril thickening around their nation ? Is it not because the Ruler of the universe has spoken to their hearts, and has bid them "Sound an alarm?" Ah, believe me, brethren, that the world is ever bound to thank God for her enthusiasts. The Prophet Joel,

who wrote the Book from which my text is taken, was a great "fanatic" when, in obedience to the Divine command, he "sounded his alarm." The Prophet Elijah was a "desperate enthusiast" when Ahab met him with the sneer, "Art thou he that troublest Israel? Canst thou not leave us alone," he would say, "spare thy denunciations, and keep thy extreme views to thyself? Thou troublest Israel—away with thee." Jonah the Prophet was an "intolerant bigot" when, after that first natural shrinking from his mission, he stalked through the streets of Nineveh with his wild appearance and his unearthly cry, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." John the Baptist was a "troubler of the people" when, clad in his camel's hair and half starved by his asceticism, he drove those thousands to repentance and confession, and carried his noble mission into the very palace of the king? And, lastly, was not Jesus, the incarnate Saviour Himself, a "bold and enthusiastic reformer" when He denounced the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, and "turned the world upside down" with His outspoken philosophy? And through them all there ran that same electric power which will never be absent from the world's reformers as long as the world shall last. The finger of Almighty God had touched their lips, and His voice had breathed into their hearts the stirring message, "Sound an alarm."

And what is the alarm that this day is being sounded in above one hundred churches at Manchester, and which I have been especially and personally requested to sound in this metropolitan cathedral to-night? It is not that any foreign invader threatens your shores; it is not that any internal disturbance is imperilling your peace; but it is that licentiousness and immorality of a certain definite and tangible kind are dragging down this nation to a level lower than heathenism. It is that England—great and powerful

and Christian England—is suffering herself to be shorn of her locks of power by the modern Delilah of strong drink, in whose harlot lap she is daring to slumber. It is that *the* nation of Europe whose most especial boast it is that she emancipates slaves all over the world—that she interposes with self-denying generosity to check wholesale cruelties in less enlightened nations—it is that this nation is suffering her own children to be bound hand and foot in the shackles of a slavery more demoralising than any that galled the negro in the plantations of Jamaica ; it is that there is not a grade of society, not a profession of mankind, not a branch of commerce, not an incident of social or even religious life, which is not mixed up with the use of that which is desolating homes, murdering wives, starving little children, and wrecking souls for whom the Saviour died ; it is that this nineteenth century of civilisation and scientific research has allowed itself to be utterly hoodwinked into exalting that which has proved itself to be the progenitor of every wickedness into an angel of light, without which good Christians think they cannot live—making it to be the friend of the family, without whose presence no relative can be interred, no infant christened, no sorrow endured, no pleasure enjoyed. Let me ask you, in this House of God, my brothers—Is it not a miserable paradox to go on repeating that cuckoo-cry about England being better free than sober. Free and yet not sober ? Why there is no slave-driver so brutal, there is no servitude so uncompromising, as the galling yoke of intemperance, and amongst the impossibilities of this law-governed universe may fairly be ranked the “freedom” of an intemperate nation. I am no stranger, brethren, to the difficulty of bringing home the full power of this evil to the minds of those who have not witnessed it for themselves. The fact is that it is too terrible to be believed, and I do not wish to

sadden and to sicken you with details of our nation's shame, but I would speak to you first simply on the grounds of common-sense. I would ask you to look with me for a few moments at the utter shocking waste that is entailed by this national infatuation. Was there ever a period in England's history when the contrast between rich and poor was more sharp, more apparent, than it is to-day? Was there ever a time when charity was more eagerly solicited, when pauperism was more appallingly rampant? And yet, amidst all this want and suffering, this nation is annually pouring out a perfect river of gold upon a mere indulgence—an enormous sum of money, which outstrips all the other national expenses. £150,000,000 of money are wasted—aye, ten thousand times worse than wasted—in intoxicating drinks: a sum which is £60,000,000 in excess of our whole national revenue, and one-sixth of our national debt—a sum which means more than £20 spent in intoxicating drinks upon an average by every family in the United Kingdom; and thus, mark you, all the legitimate trades of this country, *except one*, are depressed, and toil-worn men and women groan under the burden of their local taxation. I would venture to ask when will the hard-worked business men of England, who are wincing under the rates of this great metropolis in which they live—when will they have the courage to rise up and fight against the tyranny that makes them bear the burthen of England's drunkenness? When will they realise that their pinching and privation and struggles come from the fact that there are in this wealthy country millions of paupers to be supported by the rates, and that from unmistakable evidence we can prove that out of every hundred inmates of our workhouses no less than 75 per cent. are there directly or indirectly through drink, and that £3 out of every £4 of the poor-rates of this country, which are wrung at such bitter

cost from struggling householders, are paid simply for the paupers that the drink has made. I venture to repeat, without fear of contradiction, what has been said before, that it would be infinitely cheaper for this country to pay off at any cost the some 200,000 people who are engaged in this pauper-making traffic, and so ease the terrible and ever-increasing burden of those rates which are pressing both on the rich and on the poor.

But you will readily understand, my brethren, that it is not upon grounds of national economy that I am sounding my alarm in this cathedral to-night. I would say, let this wealthy nation become as insolvent as any Eastern principality that you like, and she will come under no pulpit lash from me, so long as her account at the bank of her God has a balance on her side. No, it was not to save a few paltry thousands of pounds, it was not to lighten a few heavy rates, that you and I were enrolled in the army of the Crucified : but it is because this black and blighting curse is not only robbing men of money, but it is robbing Jesus of the souls He loves. It is desolating our churches, it is swelling infidelity and sin, it is originating, strengthening, and fostering prostitution and Sabbath-breaking. Let me tell you that at a census which was taken not long since in a teeming London parish upon a Sunday night, 18,000 persons were found in various places of worship, but not less than 20,000 were found in the drink-shops and gin-palaces of the same parish, giving on that single Sunday night a clear gain of something like 2,000 for the devil—and it is simply notorious that wherever the English name and the English flag are borne by British enterprise and British commerce, there rises up the wail which follows in the track of British intemperance. A native prince of high rank in India, in a published speech delivered in this metropolis, has openly said : “The helpless

widows of India are uttering their curses against the British Government for having introduced this thing into their midst, and the cry of India is echoed back to us from the far, far west. ‘What do you preach?’ asked a North American Indian not long since of a missionary. ‘Christ,’ was the answer. ‘Then away with you,’ he said, ‘we don’t want Christ. We were once a powerful people, and our enemies feared us, and our wigwams were healthy, and our young men were brave; but the white man came, and he preached Christ to us, and he brought the accursed fire-water with him, and now our tribe is enervated, our wigwams are poor, our glory is gone—we do not want Christ.’ ”

I believe that the most awful, and at the same time the most significant, symptom of England’s shame may be found in this fact, that intemperance is poisoning the blood of England at its very source, for it is obtaining a fatal hold upon the women of this country. There is no sight upon this fair earth that is more painful, more repulsive, more degrading, than a drunken woman. There is no example more demoralising to the young, more hardening to the old, more lowering to the whole tone of the nation, than the example of the wives and the mothers of England abased by this most horrible sin. Those who squander their eloquence in the House of Commons and elsewhere in supporting the present system of multiplying beer-houses and gin-palaces around the dwellings of the poor, whilst, mark you, they would not for the universe have them round their own homes, would do well to study the official report recently delivered from the visiting justices of Westminster House of Correction. During the past twelve months no less than 5,131 women were convicted of drunkenness at this place of punishment alone—five thousand and more of the sisters and of the wives of England in one house of correction alone five thousand

mothers of England destined to poison the blood of their unconscious offspring with those infernal fires that have coursed through their own veins, robbing them of purity, of happiness, of home, of heaven. And when in future years some poor miserable malefactor is led out to yield up his life upon the gallows from some foul murder committed under the influence of drink, physiologists know—aye, and Almighty God knows, too—that his poor trembling defence is literally and absolutely true, “I couldn’t help it.” No, he couldn’t help it, for he drew in the poison that made him a murderer from his mother’s breast. That which should have been to him the purest fountain of human life made him a baby-drunkard from his mother’s womb. And, then, we who denounce this terrible evil are told—we who would stop this wholesale generating of criminals, this poisoning of the very springs of life without being too tender as to the means we use—we are told that we are madmen and fanatics, and must be hooted down by society. Yes, such men are fanatics, thank Almighty God for it. It is a blessed and it is a heaven-sent fanaticism. It is a fanaticism like that of Elijah, and Jonah, and John the Baptist—the total abstainer, and the reprobate of kings. But, I confess, it seems to me that if there is any madness in the matter at all it is all upon the other side.

And then we come to the question—Is it possible for us to do anything to stop this torrent of sin which seems to be sweeping all before it?

My brethren in Christ, the real value of lifting this into a pulpit rather than a platform question, lies in this, that we are able to deal with it from the pulpit not from a utilitarian but from a Christian point of view. There is but one remedy that can reach right down into the depths of this foul pool of iniquity, and that is the remedy which is given to us in the

cross of Jesus Christ. In the Temperance movement, from first to last, I pray Almighty God to teach me to know nothing amongst you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Earthly philosophies, and the labour of philanthropists and secular reformers, and the spread of education,—all will do much to ameliorate the suffering fever to the sins of human life, but they cannot go down to the heart of the disease. To take a simple illustration from the history of the Old Testament. You see Moses crying to the Lord, for the waters were bitter, and the people were perishing; and the Lord showed him a certain tree, which, when he had cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. And as the cry of this generation rises up into the ears of the Lord God of Hosts, He points us to the wood of a certain tree, which is the wood of the rugged cross of Calvary, and he says, “There is no man, or woman, or child so feeble but that they can help to cast that wood into the waters of human life which the sin of man has so embittered.” And you do not need me to tell you that the wood of the cross of Christ must imply self-denial in things lawful, self-mortification in things pleasant, self-abnegation in things harmless in themselves, if they are standing in the way of Christ’s kingdom.

Experience, ten thousand times confirmed, has proved that there is only one cure for the individual drunkard, and that is absolute, uncompromising abstinence from that which has ensnared him. Some lover of souls must take the poor serpent-stricken man by the hand, and must bid him fix his eyes upon the crucified One, and suffer that lesson to be burned into his soul. His motto must be for the future, “They that are Christ’s *have* crucified the flesh,” and in plucking out his right eye, or cutting off his right hand, he will enter into the sunshine of the pardon of his God, who

has never ceased to love him. And if any one of you would taste the unspeakable sweetness of leading such an one back to Jesus—if you would approach the work with clean hands and with an unfettered heart, then I say that you may use your Christian liberty in bearing that cross first yourself. Understand me, brethren. I would say that there is no command from God that I can find that all Christians *must* be abstainers ; but I do say this, that a Christian who loves his Lord *may* be an abstainer if he chooses. He may say boldly, “This thing never hurt me, but it has stung my brother’s soul to the very quick, and if it were ten thousand times a gift of my God I would renounce it in the present distress for the love of Jesus and the love of souls. I will take King David of old for my pattern, when he poured the water from the well of Bethlehem upon the burning sand rather than drink it, for it was the price of blood. I will follow the example of those Corinthians who were sanctioned by the Apostle in abstaining from the Divine ordinance of marriage in a time of great distress ; or I will imitate St. Paul, who declared that it was good to drink no wine, if it caused his brother to offend. In short, I will take the wood of the certain tree—the tree of the cross of personal self-denial—and I will cast it into the waters of my life.” And, oh ! you cannot think how it will sweeten those bitter waters, how it will return in blessings from on high ; you can scarcely form an idea how it wins souls, how it leavens society, how it checkmates the devil upon his own ground, when the leaders of society, the shepherds of souls, the guides of their fellows, boldly accept this blessed line of self-denial for others.

And, brethren, I said I would only speak to you in this matter in the name of my Master, and if there is upon the floor of this cathedral a single person who believes from the

very bottom of his heart in that blessed message of "Jesus only" as the golden key of Heaven—if there is one who, having been forgiven himself the bitter debt of sin, is longing to pour out his soul in gratitude to Jesus who has forgiven him, I would venture to claim that one as a recruit for our Temperance army in whatever corps he may select. I would ask you not to allow yourself to be put off by any of those well-known soul-opiates whereby the world can still the voice of God; men will tell you that we exaggerate the evil, that we cannot deal with the mischief, and that because we can do so little we had better do nothing; but if I could only take you by the hand, and if I could lead you down a dozen streets in the populous parish committed to my care, I am convinced that, if you have love within you, you would hesitate no longer to throw yourself into this movement. I would show the pinched faces and the bare feet of little children, which would haunt you when you were once more around the fireside of your own happily temperate home. I would show you an aged father, in the grey evening of his life, when all nature within him is craving for rest, and peace, and quiet, simply mourning out his days for the drunkenness of a son, who is bringing down his white hairs with sorrow to the grave. I would show you a young wife upon her knees, pleading with Almighty God, with trembling lips and broken heart, for the conversion of an intemperate husband. Only two years ago that young man began, in all the brightness of his youth, the married state; and now he is, as one has said, "a slave to a demon, whom he worships instead of his God, whom he loves instead of his wife and children, and who, in return will give him nights of misery and days of despair, and leave him at last to die on the gibbet or in the madhouse." Or I would take you to where, a few months back, there lived, and there

worked, and there prayed, a Christian wife and mother; and I would ask you to bear with me while I tell you of her story, which is known now to the angels of heaven. The hard hand of want sometimes dulled the fire on her hearth, for the father of the family was away beyond the seas ; but the anxious struggle of her daily life was sweetened for her by the master-secret of all spirituality. She loved her God, and she had learned to say, “ Not my will, but Thine, be done.” She hoped on in patience for her husband’s return, when his earnings would wipe off the debts which she had incurred for food and clothing, and the sad times of pinching would have passed away from her. Brighter and brighter I saw the weary face become as the time approached for his return, and at last the flag proclaimed the welcome news of the safe arrival of the vessel in which he served ; but upon the following day a hasty summons took me to the house, and there I saw the wife and mother, her reason fled, her eye rolling in frenzy—a hopeless maniac. The human brute who was her husband had returned upon the previous day, and had staggered drunk and penniless into his home. Such a termination to weary months of watching extinguished in a moment the feeble light of that overtired brain. They bore her to the County Lunatic Asylum, and in three days she had passed away to that home “ where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”

Oh ! my brothers in Christ—you whose hearts can be made to boil within you with indignation at the cruelties of Batak—I ask you, was not that gentle mother as surely murdered as if the sword of a Circassian had been drawn across her throat ? Will not Almighty God require her blood at the hands of those who caused her death ? In despair I ask, what has become of the spirit of chivalry and of eager zeal which prompted the Holy wars of old, when the men of

England can calmly sit down under such bitter wrongs as these, which are happening every day around them? I can only say, for myself, that as I stood in that drink-cursed home, with those little motherless children weeping around me, I raised my hand and my heart to God, and I pledged myself that, so long as I have my reason and my speech, I will never sheathe my sword; but I will fight in every way in my power against this wife-murdering, hell-filling, nation-destroying sin.

And now, brethren, I feel that I have "sounded my alarm." I would rather leave my message with you. It is not for me to suggest the remedy, so much as to simply tell you of the wrong. If you would share in the salvation of Christ, I would warn you, before the altar of God, that you must share in His battle with the sin around you. And so I would pray you, in the name of God, to "take alarm" at the sin of England—to awake, and to shake off the drowsiness of conscience that has hitherto kept you aloof from the great Temperance reformation. I would ask you, from this very night, to determine to have your share—little though it may be—in the work that is going on; to do something, to give something, to speak, to protest, to vote, to abstain, to do anything you like, so long only as you work for Christ in this matter.

And, lastly, suffer me to ask you—Why do you not, in this vast metropolis, enforce the existing laws regulating this traffic? Why do you not diminish the facilities for drink that are around the working classes this very night? Why do you not labour for the closing of public houses on the Lord's Day? Why do you not promote counter-attractions to the public-house? Brethren, think on these things. And I would ask you also to support most liberally with your alms all temperance societies, whatever their name. Especially am

I bound to plead for the great national society which bears the name of the National Church, and of which Her Majesty is the patron. I wish that I could elicit from every soul in this cathedral to-night a solemn promise to Almighty God that he or she would send that society a subscription before this year is out. And once more let me remind you that this is God's call, and not mine. It is Almighty God who is calling thee, and who is bidding thee stir up thy nation to a sense of its peril. He is bidding thee pour out before the world such a flood of light—religious, physiological, and political—upon this question, that error and prejudice and interest may flee away before it; and remember that the Lord, by dying for you, has made you, every one, trumpeters of His army. He has laid it upon the conscience of all of you to summon His hosts into the field ; and so, in this cathedral, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I bid every single one of you go forth into the society in which you severally move, and

“SOUND AN ALARM.”



TO THE RESCUE !

" Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden."—GALATIANS vi. 1-5.

I NEVER speak on the subject of Temperance without much anxiety—not because I doubt the truthfulness of the cause which I plead, but because I know that no words of mine can give utterance to the intensity of my conviction ; and I always fear lest I leave the impression upon my audience that I am not so earnest, that I am not so thoroughly impressed with the importance of this matter, as I ought to be. I do believe—and please accept my confession of faith at the outset—that there is no subject which so much demands the careful and the prayerful attention of Christian men and women in our land at this time as the subject to which I call your attention this afternoon. We know that there is no specific evil so great as that against which we contend. We know that there is no hindrance to the progress of the Gospel so mighty as that against which we have been battling with such feeble power, and with such little success, for many years ; and there is nothing in my judgment that has been less studied, and that has been less successfully resisted by the Christian Church, as this very evil, to which it ought to have given its best attention and its most earnest labours. Surely I do not need to tell you that it is the duty of Christian men to labour for the reclamation of the lost—to follow the footsteps of Christ, who went about doing good and healing all that were possessed of the devil. At this

time of day at least it ought not to be necessary to insist upon this, that the plain and paramount duty of all Christians is to do all the good in the world they can; but especially to use that mighty instrument—the Gospel of God's grace—which has been entrusted to them, so that sinners may be saved from the snares of the enemy, and made partakers of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ with eternal glory. And I am convinced, if men were really painfully alive to their duty in this matter, studied it, and wrought in it as they ought, there would be less carelessness and much more real effort directed to this sin of intemperance. They would find it, as earnest Christian labourers have found it, and have been taught by finding—they would find it to be the enemy against which they had to do the most earnest battle. And they would be taught to “gird on the whole armour of God that they might be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.” Yet, while I propose to call your attention to this special labour for saving the lost, and for promoting the security of others, I dare not enter upon the subject without remarking that, for Christian men and Christian women themselves, this question has a very close and common interest. Some people talk as if asceticism were always a hurtful thing, and as if self-indulgence were always a safe thing. They speak as if they required to be continually on their guard lest they in any way hindered themselves from getting all the pleasure possible in life, and they seem to imagine that it is a very dangerous thing to limit or narrow their enjoyments either on the right hand or the left. Now, I don't plead for monkery, I do not plead for asceticism in the old sense; but I do plead for what Paul taught us to be a desirable thing—a thing concerning which he himself felt that he needed to make self-denying provision. Let us not forget his wise and needful words: “I therefore so run not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air. But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway.”

Do we not need to be reminded in these times that, as the soldiers of Jesus Christ, we ought to endure hardness, and that our dangers are not from the side of lessening our pleasures, but

from the side of increasing them : that we need, as philosophers have done for the sake of their philosophy, and as statesmen have done for the sake of their patriotism, to reduce our living within narrow limits that we may not be subject to temptation. For I have read of a man of science who would not have his science prostituted, and become solely the means of any desire for gain, and of a patriot who would not have himself subject to bribes, and therefore each taught himself to live on bread and water. So also, that our bodies may not tempt us, and that our minds may not be misguided or misgoverned, we ought to restrict ourselves within very narrow limits indeed, if we would live unspotted lives, and bring forth fruit unto God. Then let me say, moreover, that I believe in all its quantities, and in all its so-called usefulness, intoxicating drink blunts the fine edge of conscience, and lessens that sensitive spirituality which those who work by the Spirit of God should so carefully preserve. And if we would have keenness of heart and integrity of purpose in following the Lord, we cannot afford to introduce into our system that which will lessen and lower in a remarkable degree—in a degree in which many, I believe, are not aware that it is possible that it should be so lowered—the spiritual power which God is so graciously pleased to bestow. While in the body, talk as we may, we are subject to the limitations of the body, and as the mind, distinct though it be, cannot work when the body fetters it, so the spirit, distinct though it be, cannot work when both mind and body fetter it ; and both mind and body are fettered, in a lesser or greater degree, just in proportion to the amount taken of those drinks which so many people prize. I am not going to prove that, because everybody knows it. Those who use those things know it better than we do who don't use them, for they have experience of it every day they live. No man can be so devoted and so earnest in his zeal toward God if he is indulging the flesh in any measure, and every man feels that just in proportion as he blunts those spiritual powers that God has given him, to that extent is he hindered from manifesting Christian life and exercising Christian power as he ought to do. Now, without saying anything further on these points, on which I might have raised a personal argument in support of total abstinence, let me proceed to deal

directly with the subjects that are suggested by our text. Listen, again, to what is specially said, first of all, concerning Christian duty, in the restoration or the recovery of the fallen: "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." I am not going to insist on the meaning of the word "overtaken"—whether it means, as some suppose, "surprised by the sin," or "surprised and detected in the sin": it does not matter what interpretation we give to this term; if men are found in sin anyhow, it is the duty of spiritual men to extricate them from it somehow. This duty appertains specially to those who have made the greatest advance in spiritual life. "Ye who are *spiritual* ought to restore such an one." Some people think that spirituality consists in living apart from the common crowd, in maintaining solitariness, in avoiding the locality of evil, and withdrawing one's self from its sphere, as far as possible. When a man lives a hermit's life within a great city, and shuts himself up within the cell of his own peculiar life, and is always thinking, or seems to be always thinking about heavenly things, meditating upon scriptural subjects, that man is considered a most spiritually-minded man. That opinion is not scripturally sound. That man is most spiritually-minded who is fullest of the Spirit of God, who is like Jesus, on whom that Spirit rested in all its energy, and who went about doing good, grappling with disease and death and sin in all their strongholds. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners; He did not stand aloof or shut Himself up in His retirement that He might cherish His own feelings and desires, but He went about healing and helping, as God gave Him opportunity, all the days of His ministry upon earth; and we who are spiritual are to be like Christ, not caring only to keep alive the life in our own souls, but seeking to make that life tell upon others. And let me tell you a secret—that is the only way to keep it alive. If you shut it up, it will surely dull and die, for that is the law of all fire and life. A man who is not working for Christ in a Christlike manner, is starving his own soul, and if the grace of God is not specially given to him, that life will die out. It is in labouring that we thrive; in doing good as we have opportunity, that we

maintain the spiritual-mindedness which the Lord hath first given us. This is the duty of spiritual men ; are they fulfilling it ? I apply the question, of course, to this special sin, which confessedly is the greatest sin of the present day. What are our spiritually-minded men doing to check drunkenness ? I am not going to speak uncharitably ; I am not going to condemn or call to account any of the members of Churches, or any Churches of any kind whatsoever ; I am simply asking this question, and it merely rests with our consciences to give the reply : What are the spiritually-minded men, those who are most devoted and Christ-like, doing to check drunkenness ? Sometimes they complain of what ungodly men are doing in this movement. Why, that should put them to the blush. "Tell it not in Gath ; publish it not in the streets of Askelon." Do not let us hear such words as these coming from the Churches, when the Churches are folding their hands and doing little or nothing. It is the greatest discredit and disgrace that one can imagine that they should have to speak of the efforts being made to save drunkards by men who honour not the Lord Jesus Christ, if, meanwhile, they are idling or fooling with their duty. But, I ask again, what are the spiritually-minded men doing to check this sin ? and if they are doing anything, what success has attended their endeavours ? Are they seeking to restore those who have fallen, and are they doing it according to the advice that our text gives, and that I do not need to say the Gospel gives throughout ? "Ye who are spiritual restore the fallen, *rejoin*, or in surgical language *reduce*, the dislocated member, restore such an one in the *spirit of meekness*." I beseech you by the gentleness and meekness of the Lord Jesus Christ. No one purer and no one meeker than the Lord Jesus Christ—in Him all purity and meekness dwelt together. If you show me a proud man I will show you a sinful man, and the sinfulness is just in proportion to the pride. If you show me a meek man I will show you a pure man, and the purity will be just in proportion to the meekness. Tenderly and hopefully deal with the fallen, "considering thyself." Sir James Simpson, in the advice he gave on one occasion to some medical students, said : "Let us all cultivate to the utmost the steady manliness of hand and head which our profession so urgently

demands ; but do not despise that gentle womanliness of heart which the sick in their depression and pain so often look for, and long for and profit by. Be to every man his beloved, as well as trusted, physician."

Need I say that this is specially needed in dealing with those who are suffering by sin, and that if we are to help those who have fallen, we require to go to them in a spirit of meekness. Now, I ask this : Are those who do not take our position inclined to deal with drunkenness in the spirit of meekness ? Read the newspapers. Listen to the diatribes that are thrown out continually against this evil by men of the world, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, by members of the Church of Christ. They condemn it with unfaltering lips. They speak of it in the strongest and harshest terms, as though to clear themselves of any complicity in it. Where is the spirit of meekness ? If we would save men we must be like Christ in dealing with them—as winsome as He was, as amiable, as equally willing and ready to help. He did, indeed, bid away the Pharisees from Him by a certain repellance that goodness always has towards hypocrisy, but we are told that the lost and the outcast in Judea flocked around Him, and listened eagerly to His words. They knew that He felt for them, and acquainted as they were with the terribleness of the evil against which—no, they were not contending, but under which they were suffering, they listened to Him, if peradventure some words of health and healing might come to them from His lips. So it is, we must be in the world. If we would reclaim the fallen, we must have that meekness and gentleness which characterised the Lord Jesus Christ ; and this only comes to us sinners in its fulness, I believe, when we have this other qualification that is added in the text, "*considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.*"

There are hundreds of our moralists who are not afraid to declaim against sin because they think themselves quite beyond it. They stand on a sort of pedestal that can never be assailed. Whatever others may do, they cannot fall, and they have no consideration for those who have fallen. They are quite unlike the good man who, on hearing another speak uncharitably concerning a brother who had fallen into sin, said, "Ah ! sir, if opportunity were on the one hand and Satan on the other, and

the grace of God on neither, where would you and I be?" There are some people who think they could not be tempted into drunkenness, or into many other sins that I could mention, and they have no consideration for themselves in such matters at all. They do not know the subtlety of Satan, or the weakness of their own hearts ; and they do not remember that in them—in their flesh—there dwelleth no good thing, and that their brethren who have fallen are just as good and as excellent in the sight of God, or, to put it correctly, as destitute of good and as destitute of excellence as they are. If we would save others, and if we would exercise the meekness that is essential, it must be with this genuine and salutary self-regard, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Now, I say that the principles which we commend to-day, embrace all this. The origin of the temperance reformation was a desire in the hearts of good men to save drunkards. The movement has been characterised from its commencement by meekness when it has been rightly urged—perhaps not always meekness in rebutting Pharisaic falseness and pride—but, certainly, there is under all its efforts for the reclamation of the fallen a self-consideration, because of the knowledge we have of our own weakness, and the need of guarding ourselves against the possibility of being tempted into that sin. What does this fact mean, that we won't indulge in those drinks, but simply this—"Considering myself lest I also be tempted." Why do I keep so far aloof from this sin of drunkenness but because I believe that I may be sucked within the vortex almost unconsciously ; because I know that there is no guarantee of safety if I wilfully intrude within the province of this direful temptation ; because I know that it is only by guarding carefully and constantly against the very approaches to this terrible calamity that I can be safe from it. "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sin. Let them not have dominion over me. Then shall I be upright and innocent from the great transgression." "Considering thyself lest thou also be tempted."

Still, it is better, is it not, that we should prevent it? We are learning that in these times, and have reason to be thankful for the lesson. Ay, it is well that we should have our brave men at sea who will stand by their fellows when their ship has sprung a leak and is threatened with destruction ; and who will dare amidst the storm and the roar of the hurricane to launch the boat that they may save their comrades from a watery grave. But it is better to send out our ships well found and strongly manned, that they may not be exposed to the hazard of foundering in the midst of the ocean. And this is the way we are learning the lesson in these times. We take precautions beforehand, that these shipwrecks may not so strangely take place as they have

done in times that have gone. It is well to struggle with disease, to battle with it in its dens, and raise up from the fevered couch the stricken patient ; but it is better still to hunt it out from those lurking places where it lies in wait, day by day, week by week, and month by month, to seize hold of its victims. It is better to prevent than cure—better to hinder the calamity than even to bring relief when the calamity has come. And so it is here. "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" Bear the burdens and the heavily-weighted won't fall. Help them when they are stumbling along, strengthen the weak, and then you won't be called upon to restore fallen ones. "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*" How may we bear their burdens ? By recognising these burdens and adopting such means as will lighten them, making them as easy as possible. Ah ! how many carry weight in life, and how many might have that weight lessened by Christian thoughtfulness. Do you know that there are people who come into this life burdened with certain proclivities or temperamental sins, as we call them, and we might greatly assist them in resisting these inclinations to evil ; and there is no sin the pressure of which may be more thoroughly lessened than the sin of drunkenness. Let us remember that many souls are in a real sense burdened by it from their birth, and that it is within the power of the Christian Church, to some extent at least, to ease them of this burden. There are men who are like tinder—ready to take fire when the spark is applied to them—men who are as much predisposed to drunkenness as others are to gout and consumption. They have only to be brought into the atmosphere where the seeds of this sin are flying about, and immediately their hearts and bodies become fit soil for the development of those seeds. Men that have inherited such tendencies from bygone generations, the result of the drinking habits of our forefathers, that are almost doomed to this curse from their cradles, may yet, by coming into a wholesome atmosphere—an atmosphere exhausted of these germs of drunkenness, the drinking customs—pass through life unscathed. By careful nursing, such nursing as would exclude the exciting causes of the disease, as would shield them from that withering blight which seems, sooner or later, to destroy—if they were so cared for, they may pass their lives unhurt. But nothing less than the most thorough sanitary measures will suffice. If we choose to preserve moderate drinking, we must endure drunkenness also. The danger to which such unfortunates are exposed is not lessened by the fact that those whom they respect, and in whom they have confidence, are not at all disposed to "*condescend to those of low estate,*" by a kindly policy of abstinence, but rather by their words as well as by their deeds, by their professions and by their practice conjoined, encourage

And entice them to venture further and further in the way of danger until they are wholly engulfed in ruin. I do not need to dwell on this. It is painfully suggestive to my mind, at all events—wonderfully suggestive. We might in these things bear each others' burdens, and here is the tender touching point in it—how sacredly it enforces the appeal!—“and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Oh! after all that men say about this matter, and after all the objections that are brought from this part of Scripture and the other, and after all the difficulties that are conjured up by the extra-spiritual men in one and in another generation, think of the law of Christ, and that will bear them all down. Think of Him who lived not for Himself but for others—lived for them to this extent, that He died for them, and ask yourselves “What might we not do if, animated by His spirit, we were prepared to sacrifice, not only right hands and right eyes—not only lustful inclinations and desires, but were ready freely to give all that we have in this world: if we were ready to sacrifice ourselves, after His example, for the winning of men, and ‘so fulfil the law of Christ’?” Oh! how weakly we can speak of this great argument, and how harmlessly it seems to tell on our hearts—“so fulfil the law of Christ.” “He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” And there are hundreds and thousands who are living lives of self-indulgence, and who, when we speak to them of yielding up that which, if it were abjured generally, would result in the salvation of thousands, torture Scripture to find a defence or excuse for self-indulgence. It *may* be wrong to drink. Tell me, is it not lawful to abstain? Where are the Christ-like? Where are those who are under law to Christ—“As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you.” Oh, if men were Christ-like, the world would be different from what it is. If we were bearing each others' burdens after His example, how readily and how speedily would we lessen the mischief of which we so commonly complain.

Notice next the error into which Christian men may fall. “*They think themselves to be something when they are nothing, and so deceive themselves.*” They think they are spiritually-minded, and the spiritual-mindedness, according to their judgment, consists in a zealous care for one's own interest—whether temporal or eternal—exclusive of thoughtful, practical care for the interests of others—both temporal and eternal. And such spiritual-mindedness always does issue in spiritual self-conceit—the most wicked and harmful form that base self-conceit can assume. Ah! their indolent *insouciance* only proves that they have never come under this blessed yoke—the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. They imagine that they are good men, near to God and dear to God, and yet they do not move their little finger, or sacrifice the least comfort for the well-being of their own brethren. “He who

loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" "They think themselves to be something when they are nothing, and so deceive themselves."

No man is anything who is not seeking to save and strengthen others—anything in God's sight, or after Christ's fashion. If he thinks himself to be something let him go to the Word of God, and he will discern his utter worthlessness there. If such a man thinks himself something, let him get into God's balances and be weighed in them, and what is his worth? What is he doing? Is he making men more godly by his example, by his help, by his bearing their burdens, by his living under the law of Christ? Is he raising the fallen—preventing others from falling? Is he witnessing against evil, and for God? "If a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." And how can we guard against this deceit? Thus: *Let a man prove his own work*, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another. Let a man prove his own work. Well, now, if we could only get the Churches to prove their own work in this matter of drunkenness. I believe we should advance a considerable distance in the direction in which we desire to go, if Christian men would sit down and consider this: "Well, we have been labouring for the lessening of this sin for many years, how much have we done? How far have we succeeded in the attainment of this end?" There are a great many theoretical objections to total abstinence—against its taking the place of more spiritual means and methods; but all vanish away just as the mists of the morning vanish before the rising sun as soon as they are touched by the test of practical experience. Mrs. Wightman, for instance, thought it was a wrong thing to embrace total abstinence, and in doing her good work among certain classes of the community she sought to deal with them simply by ordinary Christian methods and appeals; but she soon found that total abstinence was her strongest helper, and she adopted it most heartily, and by means of it was able to accomplish much more good than ever she had done in her life before. And, if I mistake not, a Canon of the Church of England said publicly that, during a great many years of his ministry, he did not know of any drunkards he had converted or brought into the Church by his special effort; but that he had not been a total abstainer more than three years when he was the means of inducing fifty reclaimed drunkards to attend Divine worship, and of these at least one-half became communicants. And Miss Robinson, in her testimony concerning Christianity and teetotalism, recently published, gives us letter upon letter, testimony upon testimony, of Christian men who have been raised into Christianity, and strengthened in their Christianity, by the adoption of this principle of total abstinence. Why, in the name of wonder, should many people suppose that

there is any opposition or antagonism between abstaining from a hurtful beverage and living according to the law of God in Christ Jesus? One can scarcely realise in calm thought that any such opposition should have been suggested, and yet we know that it has been, and we know that the direct and sufficient answer to it is an answer, thank God, that has been abundantly and repeatedly given in the practical experience of those who have made efforts to win souls for Christ. For what has been that experience? Why just this, that in proportion to the thoroughness of their grappling with divers evils, they have been led to adopt and enforce this principle of abstinence as a notable element of success in gaining their great end.

Suppose that the Church outside teetotalism has been acting on the supposition that the practice of moderation is the right example; that we should not abuse these drinks; that we should keep within certain limits—I ask what has been the success of this method? Why, moderation must always fail. Suppose that I am perfectly safe—suppose that I can use it and not abuse it, as men say—and that it is not possible for me to be overcome (although “consider thyself lest thou be tempted” comes in here to check any such thought)—nevertheless, for argument’s sake, let us suppose that I am perfectly free from danger, though actually I never am if I use it), still, if it is used at my table, if it has my sanction and testimony to its safeness, others are encouraged thereby to use it who do abuse it. Oh! do not we know—one feels impatient with the foolish talk in which men indulge against the necessity for abstinence and in favour of the advantages of moderation—don’t we know that where there is moderate drinking there will be drunkenness, for men here and there will cross the edge; not all men, but many men; and so long as this habit continues, so long you will reap your crop of thousands of drunkards. That has all the certainty of any observed law of nature; and so long as the Church encourages moderate drinking, she will be blameworthy in this matter. Moderation never can save men, or prevent them from falling. The only preventive—I say it in the sight of God, and I challenge an honest denial of this statement—the only preventive is to be found in our refusing to have anything to do in any case whatever with that which tempts and leads to drunkenness. Nothing but total abstinence is a preventive, and that does secure the end we have in view. Let a man prove his own work, and he will come to this conclusion. I have been told by some that their example would count for nothing. Perhaps it may be so; but, then, whether it be the case or not, so long as you are on the other side your example counts for something. You are helping to maintain these customs, and, however weak or insignificant you are, you go towards supporting this terrible evil; and there is not a good man, a spiritual man, in the world,

a Christian man, who takes his glass moderately, who does not, however unwilling and unintentionally, encourage those who are drifting hopelessly into drunkenness. Topers and revellers are pleading the example of such in support of their own misconduct. The whole weight of their influence, such as it is, is in favour of the evil ; and they are the great resistance and incubus against which we have to spend so much of our strength in defence of the weak and the removal of temptation. Let men prove their own work. Let them ascertain what is the result of their own example. Let them ask what it would be if all indulged in moderate drinking. If we who are total abstainers returned to it, might not the world become even worse than it is ? What would be the result, on the other hand, if they along with us made the sacrifice (which, they say, would not be a large one), and gave up the indulgence in these drinks altogether ? What would be the result, then, if men did not meet with this temptation, if our young men and young women were raised up in atmospheres that were not polluted by it, and were not exposed to fascinations that are so deadly in the present day—what would be the consequence in the next generation ? Tell me ! Prove both ! Will you prove moderation—but, oh ! we do not need to prove it. It is proving itself in the present time. But prove the other. Think of the result if it were universal, and tell me how we can have rejoicing except in bearing each other's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ. Hear what Paul says : “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some ; and this I do for the Gospel's sake.” There is a responsibility on every man, and there are burdens he must bear which none can bear for him. There are burdens and burdens—burdens that we cannot bear for others, and burdens that we can. There are two distinct words in the Greek text, though they are both translated “burden.” One means “weight,” and the other means the “portions assigned to us”—something that is given to us, and that we must carry—our responsibility—we cannot rid ourselves of that. We must bear it ; and how are we to deal with it in this matter ? “Oh !” some tell me—and I believe this is frequently urged—“there is the Gospel. The Gospel will cure men.” So it will—no doubt of it. I never doubted it. My life is spent in preaching the Gospel, and yet I am here to preach total abstinence, and I do it in the spirit of the Gospel. I believe it is the handmaid of the Gospel, and that it is absolutely required in dealing with a very large class in our community. What is meant when it is urged that the Gospel will save men ? It must mean either of these two things : that the Gospel will make men total abstainers, and then I am with you. I do not care how the end is gained. But if you mean to tell me that by the Gospel being preached, men becoming members of

the Lord Jesus Christ, and subjects of the grace of God, are saved from the danger of drunkenness if they continue to drink, I deny it—unhesitatingly I deny it. Christian men do fall into sin. You have the records of many instances in this book. The grace of God will not prevent a man from sinning if he walk not according to His will. And so long as men indulge in these drinks, and human nature is what it is (and here I am speaking as a physician) men will be tempted to drunkenness, and accordingly men will fall, as they have fallen, into this sin of drunkenness. Is there anyone here who will say he does not know of a Christian man who has become intemperate—I do not mean finally, that is another question—is there anyone here who denies that a Christian man may be overtaken in this fault as he has been in others, just because he has done as other people do—just because he has not taken precaution against this sin—precaution which he ought to take against all sin—abstaining from the appearance of evil? “Ought not nature itself to teach us” in this matter, as the Apostle Paul says in regard to another thing? Men do discover and may discover that this sin is so ensnaring and subtle that before they are aware of it they are entrapped. The grace of God will keep a man when he yields to it, not when he resists it. The Spirit of God will bless a man when he follows Him, not when he vexes and withstands Him. The Gospel believed, the Gospel lived—that is, the power of God unto salvation, not the mere endeavouring to cast out evil by a form of words; but the truth of God as it operates in the cleansing of our hearts, while we yield ourselves to God wholly and thoroughly, that will preserve us safely unto God’s heavenly kingdom.

Now I have done nothing more than indicate what I believe to be the truths contained in this text. One feels, after all, how little the matter is touched, and how cold our words are. Some may think I have been speaking strongly. I feel I have been speaking weakly, and I wish I could use more—what shall I say?—arousing language in regard to this matter. As I said at the beginning, I cannot give effect to my convictions by any language. I cannot utter all that is in my heart concerning this matter—all that I know of it, all that I believe concerning it; and I am fully convinced of this more and more, that it is only by the Church taking hold of these truths that it can do substantial good, and fulfil these words, “Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?” The Church needs this doctrine, while this doctrine needs the Church, and it would increase the strength of all who are labouring for Christ and build every Christian community in greater force and number, if these truths were enrolled in the catalogue of the things to be done and presented to men in the prosecution of our glorious task.

CHURCH RUINS.

IN fulfilling their great function of warning God's people, the prophets often portray the future as already present. While no sign yet breaks on the outward eye, they disclose the destruction to which the errors or neglects of the present are sure to lead.

The holy and beautiful house which Isaiah speaks of was still standing. Its destruction was not accomplished for more than a generation after. But in the vivid foresight of the prophet it is already in ruins. He sees the effect in the cause : the future outward material ruin in the deterioration of life and practice which were working to bring it about.

In the same way, long after, our Lord forebodes the destruction of Jerusalem. The city had more than recovered its ancient splendour. But underneath all the splendour the Lord saw only the beginnings of desolation. Everywhere His eye penetrated to ruin. The temple worship, the spiritual and social life, were already in ruins. Far behind, in the past, were the years when pure faith, sincere worship, and righteousness between man and man possessed the life of the people. Here at His feet lay the hypocrisy, the unrighteousness, the neglect of the poor, He had so often to lament and reprove. These were the ruins He saw. It was over these, when He beheld the city, that He lifted up His voice and wept.

The Bible is full of this pathetic foresight, this prevision of approaching woe. Some evil is at work, some error has begun to spread, some vice, or wrong-doing, in social life is suffered to remain ; and God's people are negligent, or asleep, or indifferent, and straightway a loud note of warning is struck by God's prophet, and forward on the pathway of the Church is projected a vision of disaster and ruin.

It is such a note I desire to strike to-day. I wish to arrest the Christian conscience on the general attitude of Church-going people to the great evil of Intemperance. I wish also to suggest that the continuance of that attitude is fraught with peril to the Church itself, and is even now a sign and source of decay in the life and influence of every church in the land.

And I think nowhere so fitly as in England may such a note of warning be sounded. Of nearly three parts out of four in our country,

the footprints of the past are ruins of churches. They are the ruins of the cathedrals, abbeys, priories and chapels, of the Church that was once the church of this whole land. What wrought that ruin? What broke down those walls? It needed some strong force on walls like these to work such ruin. With what an impress of strength they still rise from the ground! How grandly they spread themselves in their broken masses over the sites they cover! Pass into one of the ruined churches. The bell tower soars upward still with a noble bearing to more than half its ancient height. Between those pillars, of which only the bases now remain walked the procession of priests and religious men in olden time. From that great window streamed down on them the orient morning; far up among those corridors and arches floated the psalms they chanted as they marched. In that spot stood the altar, in that other the pulpit, and there the baptismal font. And now it is all a ruin. The walls are broken, the windows are empty of their splendours, the roof is gone, the rich carvings have become shapeless knobs of stone, and only fragments remain of what were once the statues of kings and queens.

If we go back among the centuries when all that now carries this stamp of death was astir with life, we shall see a swell and outflow of Church activity which has never been surpassed. We shall hear the great bell ring out again from that empty tower. We shall see the fields all sprinkled with worshippers flocking to its call. Congregations as numerous, as devout, as any of the present time shall be seen to fill the church.

What emptied such churches? What touched those beautiful buildings with the hand of death? Is it only a story of storm and winter, of time and death, of one generation coming and another going, of fashions changing, and then the rain and the wind beginning to beat upon the old house until it falls? Believe it not. No once-living Church is allowed in God's world to perish so. Some inner force of ruin, some failure in the life, or some neglect in the work, of the Church existed, or it never could have ended so. And what that inner force of ruin was we have only to open a history of the Middle Ages to see. We shall there see a spectacle of a Church called to do a Church's duty among the people and neglecting to do it. We shall see a Church lifted into the supremest power this earth ever witnessed, and failing to use that power for good. A Church face to face with terrible evils in the life of her people, and leaving those evils to work their will. She that ought to have been their mother left them in the wilderness to perish. She put self-seeking in the place of her Lord, splendour of worship and priestly power in the place of temperance and purity and truth.

—and, by her neglect, broke down the everlasting marches between sin and righteousness, between purity and impurity in the life of man. That was the secret of her ruin. Her unfaithfulness destroyed her. And the great Church of the Middle Ages—the Church of our own ancestors,—which at one time rendered noble service to humanity, became a habitation of devils, and a moral and spiritual ruin. And at the Reformation the ruin descended on the very walls she had built.

Whatever other lessons may be written for us in such ruins, of these two there can be no doubt—first, that the ruined walls are but the result of ruined churches, the natural and inevitable outcome of ruin in the life or working of the Church; next, that the inner ruin may be in progress, and all the forces which are to complete it at work, before one speck of decay is visible without. It was so in Isaiah's day; it was so in the days which preceded the Reformation. The elements of ruin were at work in the thoughts, principles, practices of the churches of those times, and were eating out their life and strength; and all the while their priests and people were gliding on unconscious of the woe.

It is on these facts I stand to-day. The evil we have to contend with is so gigantic that we can only hope to succeed if the Christian Church is with us in the conflict. And it is very far from being with us. Face to face with this awful sore along every path it treads, and under the most solemn responsibility to take it in hand, it is yet practically all but letting it alone. Can it afford to let it alone? Can it pass by on the other side and continue itself to prosper?

Surely I may say that no Christian, or society of Christians, is free to stand aside when questions like these are raised. They mean one stage forward:—What is the worth of the forces in reserve for the Christianising of this land? They mean one stage back:—Has ruin seized on the Churches of the land?

Nothing could well come nearer to us, therefore, on an occasion like this, than the question I have raised. I give it a general scope by asking: “What are the things which bring ruin on a Church?”

It is a happy circumstance, in relation to this inquiry, that we are not left to find our reply in the imperfect observation or one-sided inferences of man, but are able to avail ourselves of the teaching of our Lord Himself.

In five of the Epistles to the Seven Churches He has occasion to point out elements of ruin which were at work in those Churches when His message was sent to them, and which did actually work ruin to them in after days. Taking the epistles together, we have a natural history of ruin—or, more precisely, a panoramic exhibition

of its successive stages, from the first unsuspected beginnings to the last unmistakable development. We see the first faint touch of decay—the first slight inlet of the destroying force—and then, spot after spot, until the evil has penetrated through the entire life of the Church, and nothing remains but to make manifest to the eye of man what is already a complete ruin before the eye of God.

Taking these Churches in their order, and lifting up what was special to each, we shall find the following conditions set forth as the descending stages in the ruin of Churches :—First. Decay of love to Christ. Second. Decay of pity for human souls. Third. Decay of thoroughness in Christian work. Fourth. Decay of humility.

I.

I think it is very arresting—very well fitted to put all who are interested in the success of an enterprise like ours, and in the welfare of the Church, upon self-examination—that the first element of ruin mentioned is *the decay of love to Christ*: “I have somewhat against thee ; because thou hast left thy first love.” The Church to which these touching words were addressed might well receive them with surprise. It was that Church of Ephesus to which Paul’s deepest epistle had been sent. It was a Church with a glorious past to look back to. In Paul’s day it was full of love—love to Christ, to His people, to His cause ; full of that Divine force which is the one all-conquering power in the war with evil. It was still a zealous Church ; it was at one with its Lord in its adhesion to sound doctrine. It held aloft in dark days the banner of truth. It still hated what Christ hated, and it had put His enemies to shame. But along with all this zeal for the truth there was a falling away from love—a declension, not in numbers nor in orthodoxy, but in love. A little thing to look at!—a thing the human eye cannot see, but very patent to the eye of Christ. He, whose own heart is love—who is yearning for love—feels the want of the old fervour—the old outcoming of heart towards Himself. It is not the home which once welcomed Him as its life ; or, if there be welcome still, it has not the old love at its heart. He has occasion to say, as in Jeremiah’s days, “I remember the holiness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, thy walking after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.” That time has gone. A strange new time has come into its place ; and there is this sad want in it—this first touch of woe—this real fall, although only by one step, from life—that the young, fresh, personal love to Christ, stirs no longer at the heart. Other loves may be present, but to want the direct love which goes out upon the Saviour Himself, that is the beginning of ruin for the

Church—the fruitful beginning of neglect in all Christian work. And just that, my Christian friends, is the secret, wherever it exists, of the Church's indifference to the evil which has brought us together to-day. At the root and heart of it lies a failure of love to Christ, and a falling away from sympathy with that yearning sincerity of love in Him which led Him to lay down His life for the lost.

II.

The Churches of Pergamos and Thyatira are those in which the next step in the descent to ruin is exhibited. It begins with conformity to the world ; but the deep, underlying evil is *Failure of compassion for human souls*. With the exception of a few Jewish converts, the members had been gathered out of the pagan community. Paganism, therefore, was the world which they had abjured, on which they were not to look wistfully back, from whose influences they were to guard their flock, and to whose beliefs and customs they could no longer conform. And it so happened the test of sincerity with them, as with ourselves, turned on an act of abstinence. The flesh sold in the market was the left portion of animals which had been sacrificed to idols. Could a Christian eat of such flesh ? Could he use it without becoming a partaker in idol-worship ?

Far more was involved than a scruple of conscience. Mixed up with that whole system of animal sacrifices were customs saturated with impurity and wrong living. They had abandoned those customs ; they had come under obligations to forsake "the trespasses and the sins" of the world they had left.

It was a difficult position to maintain. To abstain from flesh offered to idols was to separate from almost the entire social life of the time—to shut themselves out from public and private festivals and hospitalities, and, to that extent, to abridge their undoubted Christian liberty. Yet, in the first fervour of their love, all this had been cheerfully endured. What was animal food, what was the enjoyment of hospitality, when placed in the balance with the salvation of souls ?

The two Churches had striven to be true to their position ; and in many things they had succeeded. There was a maintenance of sound teaching on the central doctrines—"Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith." All that ! But along with that, there began to be the toleration of loose views regarding practice ; and, in practice itself, a falling away from the early abstinence ; and, in all that, a failure in the concern for human souls.

"Why should we abstain ? 'tis such a narrow thing to be an

abstainer. An idol is nothing, and meat offered to an idol is nothing ; and we are free to enjoy all God's creatures. Let us cast away our narrowness, and be neighbourly and do as others do, and make no difficulty ! ”

But it was just the time in the history of those churches when to practise this liberty was to cast stumbling-blocks before the souls of the people. It was that time which, sooner or later, arises in every mission field, that time of sifting and trial, when old habits begin to reassert their sway, when the converts bend back towards the enjoyments they have left, and recall with a certain longing the self-indulgences of the past.

A generation was springing up who had not themselves known the evils of pagan life,—the children of the first converts. Instead of being trained up in the fear and hatred of pagan customs, they beheld around them in the Church compliance with, toleration, and at last open defence of, these customs. Older members repaired to the pagan feasts and ate of the forbidden flesh,—why should young people put a restraint upon their lives ? They broke loose from the old safeguard and ceased to be abstainers. They went to the feasts as their neighbours did, they listened to the wild talk, they immersed themselves in the foul atmosphere. They familiarised their eyes with pagan practices, their ears with pagan songs, and, bit by bit, they were drawn in and down into the pit of unclean life, of utter and abominable wickedness, to which the conformity in the one matter of eating was bait and trap. The very pathways of the Church became filled with pitfalls ; the practices of Church members became the traps and snares.

Do I not seem to be telling a story of the present time ?

That old pagan world is far behind us ; but the world itself is not behind us. And that with which we are called to contend, is a world with practices as full of danger to the purity and well-being of souls and churches, as any that ever wrought ruin on the earth. And it is still, as in those foul days, a world of self-indulgence and soft living. The only difference is, that drinking customs have only come into the place of meat offered to idols. It is when we look at these customs in connection with the evils to which they lead, that we discover that failure of pity for human souls, which is such a portent of evil among the church-going people of our land. With all the facts brought to light by societies like our own, with all the tragedies disclosed in family histories, with all the witnesses of their evil consequences on our streets, and all the sad fruits of them in our criminal courts, it seems to me that a really strong, earnest, and living Church should be tingling through all its membership.

with the inquiry: Whether it is not now, as in Pergamos and Thyatira, one of the most immediate and pressing duties of Christian men and women to refuse to conform to customs which are leading to such woes! Be sure, a Church which shuts her eyes on the evil, or folds herself up in her own delights—in mere sermon-hearing, for example, or musical services, or splendid decorations—and is not exercising herself with deep heart-searchings concerning the souls which these customs are destroying, is herself in the very track of ruin. And, therefore, I sound the alarm in the ears of all who have the prosperity of the Church at heart. I avow my own alarm. I am alarmed at the light and chaffy way in which the great Drink Evil is still referred to by members of the Church. I am alarmed at the self-satisfied scorn of abstinence which continues to prevail. I am alarmed at the amount of conformity to the drinking customs which still exists among Christian people; and at the snares and pitfalls opened by this conformity in the very pathways of the Church, in the very habits of her members; and at the awful number of souls which the Church is bound to care for, who are, meanwhile, and by the instrumentality of drink, going down into the abyss.

It is far from my wish to darken a single shadow. There was still much good even in Thyatira, the worst of the two churches—very much activity in works of gentleness and patience. I believe there is also much good, and a real striving after more good, in the churches of our land at present. There are words in the epistle which show that the good members of the church at Thyatira were very good. That is my sincere belief concerning the good members of the churches of our own time. I see many indications of real life and loyalty to Christ. But this marred the church-life in Thyatira, that the evil influences which were working hurt to the members were allowed to go on. They did not enough contend for abstinence and purity. They allowed a public opinion filled with danger to grow up in the membership. And that very evil, I think, is marring the life of our churches at present. We also are tolerant where we should be intolerant; easy where we should be strict. After our own English fashion, we also "suffer that woman Jezebel to teach and to seduce" Christ's servants. We suffer the vicious public opinion which sustains the drinking customs and feeds drunkenness, and which is the real Jezebel of our day, to continue. And we allow and practise a conformity to the world, which is on one side mere licence and self-indulgence, but on the other a stumbling-block to souls. That is the second symptom of ruin in a church.

III.

It is in the Epistle to Sardis the Lord exhibits that next step in the progress of ruin to which churches descend, which have let go their pity for human souls. It is, as we shall see, *Decay of thoroughness in work.*

It is almost a dead church He addresses. Some things remain which may be strengthened ; some little shreds and sprigs and roots of life. But with respect to the general and combined life, these are His words :—

“Thou hast a name to live, but thou art dead.”

A dead church, with the reputation and standing of a living one ! This was its awful state. Like the Church of Rome on the eve of the Reformation ; like the Protestant churches at the beginning of the eighteenth century. A dead church ! No work, which is the fruit ; no truth, which is the root ; no love, which is the sap and power of life. Everything has gone, or is about to go, in such a church. It has left its first love like Ephesus. It did not take alarm when stumbling-blocks were being scattered along the pathways of the flock. And now—except here and there a humble member all unnoticed, and here and there a little touch of life on the general surface—it has only the reputation of a church. Only the reputation ! Almost everything with life in it gone ! Almost the whole soul eaten out of it ! Only the name remaining !

Our Lord lets us into the secret of this element of ruin by a very simple but suggestive statement, “I have not found thy works perfect before God.” There were services, but in His sight imperfectly rendered. Only the show of work ; or the work without the love which is its life !

It is not difficult to fancy what such a Church is like. The picture which rises before the mind is that of a full, well-appointed, but dead ministry ; respectable but lifeless office-bearers ; a fair appearance on the Lord’s Day and at all the annual meetings ; sermons full of beauty and reports full of eloquence ; but underneath all, in the sight of God, the inworking of spiritual death, making its way to the innermost recesses and last retreats of the life of the Church ; and everything—missions, benevolence, discipline, worship —hollow, unreal and dead.

A doing of work, but not a right doing of it. The hands moving as if the work was going forward, but the work not going forward. Necessary sacrifices not offered ! Hallowness where there should be strength ! Skimming over where there should be careful finishing ! In one form or other, a want of thoroughness in the work.

Such a want as there would have been in Paul’s work if, when he

saw that his eating of idol's meat made his weak brother to stumble, he had refused for that brother's sake to abstain. Such a want as there would be in a mother's work, if when she saw her child in mortal danger, she made no sacrifice to avert it.

And just this, I think, is the want at present in nearly all the church-work I know which has temperance for its object. It is unthorough. There is this great world of crime and vice at her very door ; this unexplored wilderness of squalor and indescribable distress, seething with sorrow, with wickedness, with suffering, and smitten to the very soul by drunkenness. The work of the Christian Church in relation to this evil, is nothing less, and can be nothing less, in aim and means used, than the work of Christ Himself. It is just the continuation of Christ's work.

It requires the outgoing of the whole strength of the Church. It implies sympathy, wise planning, sacrifice of time and means, patience, and prayer.

I ask you to consider, and place over against this, the actual efforts which the Churches in this land are putting forth for the suppression of this evil.

If it were a stagnant pool in the same field with a man's house, and if the foul fogs of it came up and began to penetrate the joints, and loosen the stones, and mildew everything inside, he would surely discover that to bolt the doors and keep the windows shut would be no thorough dealing with the evil. Yet here, in the very field in which the Christian Church has been built, is a pool in our social life, every drop of which carries a power of death in it, and at this moment very nearly all that Churches as such are doing, is, by occasional discipline on its own members, to bolt its doors and keep its windows shut.

We plant Sunday-schools in districts invaded by the evil. We send city missionaries and Bible-women down there to visit, and preach. Blessings on the Sunday-school, and all honour to the Bible-women and the missionaries ! They do what they can. But I put it to the conscience of those who know that Christ gave Himself to the work, whether all that is an adequate means to use, or a fair proportion of effort to put forth, in such a work ?

We hold church meetings about district work, we read fine reports, with extracts from the journals of the missionary and the Bible-woman, and perhaps a touching story about some Sunday-scholar who died happy. Can things like these, can any amount of such things, be any real, effective, human help in the work of delivering poor drunkards from their snare ? or any perfect and honest doing of Christ's work towards them ?

An earnest spirit arises in the Church ; a revival come ; there

is a stirring of the household, and the office-bearers and principal people open their doors, and come down into the wilderness. But does any serious Christian ever bring himself to believe that it is a thorough doing of this delicate human work to come out from tables on which every luxury in drink which money can purchase has been circulating, and give speeches on temperance to poor labourers, to tramps, and to their untaught wives and children? Or that it is thorough work for people who have not abridged their own liberty in drinking by one solitary sacrifice to stand up in a company of intelligent artisans, men with brains as good as any in the land, and say—the flavour of the speaker's own indulgence still on his breath while he speaks—“Working men, down there, abstinence is a saving virtue for you.”

Or is it that a thorough doing of this Christian work, with the right hand six days in the week, to be a promoter by actual traffic of drinking, and with the left hand, one day of the seven to be a tract distributor, a Sabbath-school teacher, or a contributor to local charities, or district missions?

Can we mock God? Yet it is really just a mockery of God to put forth such efforts as these for the accomplishment of this work of His, and call them Christian missions to the heathen at home; or church attempts to abate drunkenness among the poor.

It is profession without reality; form without power; reputation without substance. What future remains for Churches which act in these ways? There can be, if they do not open their eyes on their errors and shortcomings, and repent, and strengthen the things that remain, but one step lower—and that step has been reached, and is depicted to us in the spiritual condition of those Churches of which Laodicea is the type.

IV.

This is the last stage of ruin for a Church. And it is the worst—“neither cold nor hot”—the state in which a Church has become a loathing to Christ. And when has a Church become a loathing to the patient and much-forbearing Christ? It is when it has become self-righteous and proud in its life and ways; when it is wretched, and yet has no feeling of wretchedness; when it is lost, and yet has no sense of lostness; when it has, by its own evil deeds and misdeeds, been abased into the very dust, and yet has no suspicion that it is abased, and no abasement of spirit before God. That is the Church which has become a loathing to Him. A dead, corrupt, lost Church, which says: “I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing.”

“Neither cold nor hot!” The love of a living Church to Christ is as coals of fire. It has a vehement flame, and many waters cannot quench it. To glorify Christ, to live for Him, to serve Him, to act in His spirit to the poor outcasts ; to go near to them as He did, to do His will towards them, is the one burning wish of such a Church. Its state is that in which life ascends as a flame of fire in His service. And next in well-being to such a state, is that which seems the furthest removed from it, in which Churches realise and mourn over their emptiness, their unworth, their uselessness, their nothingness ; feel that they are poor, naked creatures of the holy and great God, unprofitable servants, and out, and justly out, in the cold where His Spirit is not resting.

Paul, flaming along his great path as the Apostle of Christ to the Gentiles, is an illustration of the one state.

The publican in the parable is a picture of the other.

But the Laodicean state of a Church is neither one nor the other of these. It is that in which Gamaliels, Pharisees, diplomatists, and pretentious people abound. Neither hot—burning in loving service to Christ—nor cold, mourning over its misimproved privileges and times, and its consequent want of life, but lukewarm—without feeling of one kind or another—self-satisfied, self-contented, looking down as from some one supreme height of excellence on its human neighbours, on the poor, whom it names *the lower classes—the lapsed classes*—thinking of them as another race, inhabitants of a different and lower world, and comforting itself in its own attainments, in its numbers perhaps, in its financial prosperity perhaps, most commonly in its social position, or some similar outward, and, when life is wanting, altogether unimportant thing.

The tragic thing is that, to appearance, everything as yet indicates a spiritual state. The material wealth, the outward splendour, everything the Church has gathered in of worldly goods, ranks as so many tokens of prosperity, and the Divine blessing. And so most probably does the fact that its membership is of the better classes, that people of substance adhere to it, that it has social influence in the locality ; and in its secret heart it is a consolation to it that it is not a church of poor people, nor an uneducated church, nor a vulgar church, nor a narrow church, like that church in the shabby street which has put temperance on its flag. These are its thoughts about itself. But before God it is, all the while, a very vulgar church, and a church of the very poorest creatures in the world—poor, blind, and naked ; for it has nothing of Christ at its heart, nothing of Christ in its views, nothing of Christ in its life. A Christless church ! A church that does not even sigh or

long for Christ—a self-satisfied, proud, dead, blind ruin of a church.

There is no lower stage. All the downward steps have been taken before it could arrive at this. The falling away from love; the decay of pity, the profession without life; the want of thoroughness in work; and now, last and lowest and worst of all, pharisaic self-satisfaction, absolute scorn and heart-hatred of the outcasts, whom it is the Church's first duty to pity and try to bring in; and thoughts and ways in which God is not at all.

It only needs the arrival of some great crisis in society, some time of public unsettlement and grief, and this will be the subsequent history of such a Church—"The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

I have only two more words to add.

No one will be so uncandid as to suppose that I have been aiming at particular Churches, or very specially at particular classes in the Church. I have spoken as from the heart of the common Christian Church. If, in following the history of possible ruin in a Church, I have had to point to deficiencies, errors, or symptoms of decay in the existing Churches, I have done so not as standing apart from them, far less as standing above them, but always as a partaker both of the blame and the loss they involve.

I ask myself—I desire to press the question on every member of the Christian Church in this country—Can we stand up in the Divine presence and say we are doing all that His will lays upon us to abate intemperance? Consider the immense power for good which God has given to His Church. Are we putting forth that power? I do not hesitate to say, and I do not exaggerate when I say, that the Christian Church has it in its power at any moment to greatly subdue intemperance in the land. It needs but one small sacrifice over all its membership. Let there be the cessation from every Christian home of the drinking customs; the withdrawal by every Christian man and woman of Christian countenance from these customs. From the highest to the humblest circles let the wine glass and the beer glass be banished from the table, and Christ's people everywhere agree to abstain. Can anybody doubt that a revolution so thorough would make itself felt in the abatement of intemperance in every corner of the land!

I beseech Christian men to reflect on the grave emergency which drink has brought about in this land. It is not the question of abstinence merely which that emergency is forcing on the Christian conscience. It is also the searching, and nearer question of Chris-

tian duty and sacrifice. Shall I take any part in the great Christian burden of sorrow? Shall I put my soul, as Christ did, beneath this huge load of human suffering and sin? By sacrifice of a part, in the spirit of Him who sacrificed the whole, shall I help my poor, weak, fallen brothers to rise? That is the question; and we are each of us bound to settle it in the sight of God.

There arose a great trouble in Israel once, and the cry of it went up to God.

God sent His prophet to see. He found the poor perishing for want of food, ground down by heavy burdens, and despised.

He found the rich lying on beds of ivory, eating the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, with fine music at their feasts, rich wine in their bowls, and precious ointments and perfumes on their persons; but not grieved for "the affliction of Joseph"—the poor people down in the pit.

The brow of the prophet darkened, and these were his words as he turned away:—"Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion!"

This brings me to my closing word. It is the duty of Church members to be repairers of her broken walls.

Next to the great duty of holding fast the elements of life and stability, it is their duty to be restorers, wherever these have been let go.

Our Lord's words in the epistle to Sardis mean this very task, where He says, "Strengthen the things that remain."

All is not ruin at any spot. Some faint germs of life abide. Where there is deadness, we are to work for a revival; where there is error, for enlightenment; and where, as in the case of drunkards, there is the grip of vice, for deliverance.

There are whole fields, and at our very doors, where this last work may be carried on. What is that poor man who shrinks from public view, and creeps through life in the shade? A church ruin: drink cast him from the pulpit into the dust. Who is that, who goes past you in the street, who once, in other days, would have stopped and cordially grasped your hand? Also a church ruin: drink cast him out of the eldership. And who are these, whose footsteps were once music to those who listened for them, whose footsteps are now the subjects of a daily agony and fear? Church ruins also; fathers, husbands, wives, sons, overthrown by drink. Descendants all of them of true Church-members: true members themselves, it may be, in happier times—all of them baptised—all of them ruins of a former life. People like these must be accounted as still belonging to Christ's Church; and as only requiring Christian handling and

love to replace them among the living stones in the walls of the house.

And what are those who are termed in the modern phrase, "The lapsed classes in society—the non-church-going population?" Church ruins also. At least two-thirds of our home mission work is a repairing of broken walls. The poor people in our mission districts were, many of them, at one time connected with churches—nearly all with Sabbath-schools. They can turn up the text when you preach to them. They are familiar with the old tunes when you give out a psalm. If you descant on the Saviour's sufferings, or on His sympathies with the poor, the tears will trickle down their cheeks. Ask them, and you will find that they have been baptised. Behind the most of them, and not far behind, is a past in which they went daily to the homely chapel in some country village. Many of them can remember a time when they lived in homes where some form of family worship prevailed. Some of them, perhaps, are longing for such a time to return.

Do not weary, therefore, in this great work, Christian abstainers. Put on new strength from above, and go hopefully into the conflict. You are rebuilding, by every fallen soul you reclaim, the broken walls of Zion.

It is Church ruins you visit when you enter the homes where the victims of intemperance live. Sin, or separation from the old surroundings, or perhaps poverty, or so small a thing to look at as indolence, has broken their old life, and made them the pitiful objects they are. Do not despise them—do not neglect them. Do not say in respect of any of them, "Am I his keeper?" They are fallen, but it is as stones of God's house they are fallen. The Holy Spirit once dwelt in companies of which they may have made a part. Low though they grovel now, in bad ways and in forgetfulness of God, they are all the while stones and the dust of the temple.

O Saviour! O Great Master Builder! *Thou* dost not despise these fallen ones; and over such ruins as even these *Thou* hast taught us to sing and hope—

Thou shalt arise, and mercy have
Upon Thy Zion yet;
The time to favour her is come—
The time which Thou hast set.

For in her rubbish and her stones
Thy servants pleasure take;
Yea, they the very dust thereof
Do favour for Thy sake.

“THOU SHALT NOT HIDE THYSELF.”

“Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them ; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother.

“And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.

“In like manner shalt thou do with his ass ; and so shalt thou do with his raiment ; and with all lost thing of thy brother’s, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise ; thou mayest not hide thyself.

“Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them : thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.”—*Deut. xxii. 1-4.*

The Bible is, as everybody admits, a book of great and broad principles for the regulation of human life, stated with crystal clearness and Divine force. But much of its power is due to the fact that it is also, and by pre-eminence, a book of samples as well as of principles—of pattern-cases in which principles are clothed with the strength, and graced with the beauty of breathing life. In both testaments, for example, we read, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”; and the law is, confessedly, holy and just and good ; but how picturesquely and with what incisive and unforgettable force that comprehensive principle of neighbourly charity is set out in these simple cases of old-world legislation I have just now read ! Is thy neighbour’s ox astray ? Has his ass leapt the fence and got into the road ? Thou shalt not cowardly slink into some selfish retreat, and meanly let slip an opportunity of doing both him and thyself good. Thou shalt take pains, and give thyself trouble to catch the straying animal,

and then carefully restore it, in good condition, to its owner. On no account whatever shalt thou hide thyself. So the cardinal principle of social love, emphatically backed and brilliantly illuminated by the words and life of Christ, is in this *eleventh* commandment driven home to the heart and conscience, and used to train the whole nature by obedience in cases where the larger law might seem to have only a slender and uncertain application.

For these cases are vastly wider in their range than they seem. Paul, writing to the Corinthians concerning the reward of Christian labour, cites a passage from the law of Moses, in which it is written, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn"; and then he asks, "Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it altogether for our sakes?" and unhesitatingly he answers, "*For our sakes, no doubt, this is written*; that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope." The ox is provided for because it is a labourer, and not because it is an ox; and though the case itself is on the low plane of animal life, yet the principle on which the ox is suffered to go unmuzzled rises into the higher realms of human experience and duty. In like manner, it is written in the law of Moses, "If thy neighbour's ox fall by the way, thou shalt help him lift it up again," and not beat a retreat into some hiding-place, in order to be free from an unpleasant obligation. Yes, but what if your neighbour *himself* shall fall? Is no one to care for him? If his ox be lost, and you know not your neighbour's paddock, still you shall keep the ox till you can restore it to him. But if your neighbour himself is lost! Must not he be restored? Doth God take care for oxen, and not for men? Does He legislate for straying asses and not for straying souls? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? *For our sakes, no doubt*, it is written that when the weary pilgrim from Jericho to Jerusalem is waylaid, stripped naked, wounded, and left by rapacious robbers for dead, neither ritualistic priest nor temple-serving Levite should "pass by on the other side," and hide himself from the obligation the sufferer's need has cast upon him. Yes, for our sakes; for God's "commandments are exceeding broad," and this great ordinance of neighbourly love em-

braces lost character as well as lost oxen, lost purity as well as lost asses, lost serviceableness as well as lost girdles, lost souls as well as lost bodies—those not less than these, these not more than those—so that we may not guiltlessly hide ourselves from any self-sacrifice or trouble-taking by which we could exhaust our neighbour's lot of its misery and enrich his life with prosperity and joy. Thou shalt not hide thyself. Yes, for our sakes it is written, that we may be driven out of all those hiding-places built by the too-skilful fingers of selfishness with the distempered mortar of delusive prejudices, and forced by very shame to face and fight the prodigious wretchedness, and incalculable misery, of men who are bone of our bone, heart of our heart, and spirit of our spirit. Yes, for our sakes is this law given, I verily believe, that all Christians, without exception, and all churches of Christ, without distinction, may be led,—in these times, when the vice of drunkenness is festering and spreading in every limb of social life, and threatening with death the living centres of the body politic,—to deal in a brave and chivalrous, direct and special manner with the causes of our national intemperance, and deal so effectively and so wisely therewith that this evil may speedily and for ever cease from the land. The law of Moses, and, in this case undeniably, the law of Christ, with regard to the enormous losses caused by British insobriety, is, for one and all alike of His disciples, “Thou shalt not hide thyself.”

Let us, then, first of all, glance in the briefest manner at the *fearful losses caused by the nation's intemperance*; secondly, inquire into the *attitude of the Church of Christ towards those losses*; next describe one or two of the *hiding-places into which Christians and Churches alike retire*; and, lastly, *test such conduct by the principles underlying the words, “Thou mayest not hide thyself.”*

1. It is far too late in the day to spend much time in describing and demonstrating the evil of intemperance. The brains of the most sympathetic philanthropists, the lips of the most gifted orators, and the pens of the readiest writers, have done this work so effectively during the last forty years that at last nobody doubts it. Indeed, a new danger is at hand, the very readiness and ease of our admission of the

vast extent of the evil of British drunkenness creates a new peril. We are tempted to treat it as a matter of course, an integral part of our civilisation, inseparable from the conditions of life in these islands ; and to hide ourselves from brave and hope-inspired efforts to suppress it. It is one of the “ common-places ” of speech that more of saintliness, more of robust manhood, tender womanhood, and sweet and bright young life, is lost to this nation, year in and year out, from this cause, than from all others put together. Judges and magistrates reiterate the mournful lament, expressed by Mr. Justice Grove, that “ the drink-traffic is ruining its tens of thousands of our fellow-countrymen every year, and that if it is not put a stop to by some means or other, it will ruin the country itself.”

And yet it is not put a stop to. It is actually increasing. During the last thirty years, in spite of all counteracting agencies and efforts, there has been a vast and almost fabulous growth in our popular vice. The population of the country has only increased twenty per cent. in that time, but the consumption of alcohol has gone up more than 100 per cent ! and the disastrous and lacerating effects of drunkenness have become so glaring and ghastly that no man with a grain of patriotism in his nature can be still about them. It is the one black plague of this century, and gathers into its awful self all the desolations and miseries of the ten plagues that fell on ancient Egypt. Like an army of locusts it covers the land with its destructive swarms, and wastes millions of acres of soil and eats up millions of tons of grain. Like the plagues of lice and of flies, it fills the homes of England with rasping irritations, endless discomforts, and gnawing remorse, changing that which might be a paradise of bliss into a pandemonium of horrors. As the murrain amongst Egypt’s cattle, so this vice is the prolific source of wasteful and inveterate diseases amongst strong men, lovely women, and innocent children. As the frogs penetrated into the Royal Palace and to the homes of courtiers, defiling the bed-chamber and the bed, the oven and the kneading-trough, with their loathsome touch, so, in the mansions of the wealthy and the cottages of the poor, this evil abounds, defiling life at its spring-head, and making the land a stench and an abomination to the pure and good. The fructifying Nile was

converted into blood in all its ramifications ; so the fruitful streams of British labour are poisoned and weakened till they fail to make their beneficent way into the best markets of the world. Bodies are dwarfed and stunted, trade is cursed, and commerce restricted by it. It blisters our present national and domestic happiness, blights our future prospects, and is the darkest and thickest cloud that fills the heavens above us. And, worse than all, it kills our firstborn sons of light and genius, men of superior saintliness and consecrated power, of the finest reputation and largest culture. It is fatal to our best men, and to the best in those best men, to those finer and invisible qualities that make us the kin and kith of the angels. It is a fearful scourge and makes a loss “ deep as the fathomless ocean and wide as the boundless sea.” In its fell swoop upon the people it produces a desolation, misery, and wickedness, that, if seen in its extent and character, would not suffer us to sleep at night, or to rest in the day, save as we wrought mightily and up to the point of weariness and exhaustion, to stamp out the hideous contagion from our midst. Ah ! had we Jeremiah’s tender and sympathetic heart, we should exclaim, “ Is there no balm in Gilead ? Is there no physician there ? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered ? Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people ! ”

II. And what, my brethren, is the attitude of the Church of the Lord Jesus, considered as a church, towards this fearful and prodigious evil ? Is it all that could be desired ? Is it all that Christ our Leader and Lawgiver commands and expects ? Is it such as to give promise of the final suppression of the vice of drunkenness, and of an open field for “ the Word of the Lord to have free course and be glorified ” ?

Dare the kindest and hopefulest man amongst us answer these questions in the affirmative ? Would such an answer be fair to fact ? Would it be true ? God forbid that I should utter a word of exaggerated blame, or even suggest an accusation that is not deserved. But I cannot resist the conviction that “ we are verily guilty concerning our ” brother-man ; that the Church of Christ in these realms, charged as she is

with the salvation of our fellow-countrymen in the name and by the power of the Lord, falls far short of her responsibility in regard to this national scourge.

We have talk ; but talk does not give back the strayed ox, nor drive back the invading deluge of drunkenness. We have resolutions elegantly phrased and skilfully steered between the Scylla of interest and the Charybdis of vehement action ; but resolutions, even if carried *nem. con.*, will not lift up a fallen animal, or reclaim an erring drunkard. We have genial smiles and graceful wishes, but they never yet restored a lost purse, or, of themselves, saved a lost soul. All these things may be done, and much besides of a similar sort, and yet the country go on to its awful loss and remediless doom with a quicker step and a more heedless passion.

But this is not all we have. I rejoicingly recognise a powerful stream of indirect influence proceeding from the City of God, fertilising the land, converting the desert into the garden of the Lord, and making the wilderness to blossom as the rose. The pulpit is potent in manifold ways for sobriety. Saved men are likely to be sober. The Sunday-school is leading by the hand hosts of British youths to give their glowing life to Him who is the Saviour from all sin. Led to Him, they are led towards self-control and temperance. City and town missionaries and Bible-women are zealous of good works, and are helping to sap the power of evil. Moreover, many of the Church's most active and earnest children are engaged in a hand-to-hand and foot-to-foot war with the enemy, and are privileged to count many a victory, and rejoice over many an advance.

But still I ask, Are we where we ought to be, *as a whole*, and as we ought to be ? I know there are 5,000 ministers who are actively counterworking intemperance by lip and life, by example and precept, by organised and unorganised work ; but what of the remaining 45,000 ? Is their whole influence as decisively and as certainly crippling this subtle and ghastly foe as if they were publicly known to eschew the use of alcohol as a beverage, to refrain from the ensnaring drinking customs of social life, and to contribute a citizen's share towards the war against this particular evil ? I am told there are between seven and eight millions of professing

Christians in this country—is it unfair or unkind to say that nine-tenths of them have no more thought of destroying this vice than the seaweed, torn up by the roots, of resisting the swelling advance of the tides? Is there that passionate and soul-filled pity for the drunkard, for the drunkard's children, for the drunkard's soul, that leads the Church to “work herself to the bone,” to spend her last pound, to give the last fibre of her life for his salvation? “Man has no majesty like earnestness.” Is the majesty of the Christian life of these lands expressing itself in inventiveness of effort, fertility of resource, limitless self-sacrifice, and heroic chivalry for the suppression of intemperance? May the Lord Jesus, who was manifested to destroy all the works of the devil, count upon the Church's lofty enthusiasm, sublime zeal, immense wealth, and burning love, as He goes forth to destroy these Satanic works? “The wife of Cæsar should be above suspicion.” The Church of Christ should stand so far off, so markedly free from even the faintest suspicion of alliance with so prolific a cause of spiritual and physical mischief, that it should be impossible to breathe her name in connection therewith. But is it so? It is said, “Manners are stronger than laws.” What are the Christian “manners” in this respect? Do they add strength to, or take from the prestige and respectability and supposed safety of the drinking practices of society? Moreover, are not some of the Church's most illustrious and generous children engaged in this very traffic—making vast fortunes out of it, without even a whisper of censure from “the living voice of the Church”? Do not your deacons and elders, and leaders in painful numbers, obtain, not a livelihood—that they could get without—but a large accumulation of wealth by the sale of the shrines of Bacchus? Who are your great brewers? Who pay for grocers' licenses? What is it that is seen at your religious festivals, at Christian weddings and funerals? Is this the Church that is going eagerly over hill and dale to seek the one lost sheep? This the Church that takes the brush of investigation and patient labour, and sweeps diligently till the one lost piece of silver is found? Alas! for good reasons or for bad, for sufficient or insufficient cause, it is obvious that not a tithe of the power of the Church of Christ is directed

in any really effective way, in any way that promises speedy and universal success, to the removal of the causes of national intemperance. Meroz does not come, as she ought and might, to the help of the Lord against the mightiest foe that ever fought against the welfare of men.

III. But it is strongly maintained, and with much show of reason, that the Church is not neglecting her duty, because *she is preaching the Gospel*, and that is her first, her chiefest, her most important work. It is the supreme business of Christians to preach that Gospel to every creature, and it is as all-inclusive as it is supreme. This is the medicine that cures all evils, the sword that kills all foes, the panacea for all the woes of suffering men.

But what avails it to preach to your neighbour that he should look after his cattle, and to insist that he who does not care for his own is no better than an infidel, when that neighbour is steeped in stupidity and deaf to your appeals, and is injuring self, and wife, and child, and Church, and nation by the loss of his property? Our work is first to catch the straying ox, to restore the ass that has wandered. We must not hide ourselves from that law, not even in the ample folds of a sermon, not even in the seemingly safe retreat of a pulpit. *Help your neighbour first, and preach to him afterwards, is God's way now, and has been from the beginning.*

Do not mistake us. We have unlimited faith in the Gospel of Jesus. It is the power of God at work to save lost men. So we have limitless faith in the electricity with which the wide earth and the investing air are charged, but if we want to send a message to New York or Edinburgh we do not send for Professor Tyndall to discourse on the origin and condition of electrical action. We put a cable on the floor of the Atlantic, and we put up wires to the northern capital, and send our message along them. And when we want to send the saving power of the Gospel to the hearts of the heathen, we put down the cables of foreign missionary societies to India and China; and to reach the young we put up the wires of Sunday and ragged schools, and by their means send the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

It is the very spirit of the Gospel to employ special means for special ends. Christ did not feed the hungry with a

parable, nor drive fever from the body with a sermon. The limitless and manifold power of Christ is seen in the surprising inventiveness of those filled with His Spirit, of machinery specially adapted to the work needing to be done. Did not the Christian energy of the beginning of this century forge a special hammer in the hot flames of a Christ-like philanthropy wherewith to break in pieces the fetters of the slave? Has not the sanctified sagacity of the Church created that beneficent organisation, the Sabbath-school? Thirty-one years ago Young Men's Christian Associations took shape and form, and have thrown their protecting shield over many a young and imperilled warrior. And so for this special evil of intemperance we must have the special agency of the temperance reformation; a reformation born of Christ, baptised into His spirit, pervaded and inspired by His unselfish love, and doing His work on the earth. The Gospel is the power of God to save the young through Sunday-schools, to save the heathen through missionary societies, and to save Britain from the blight and curse of drunkenness through the temperance reformation.

For the temperance reformation is not the signing of a pledge, any more than married life is the giving of a ring, or the soldier's work is ended by the receipt of the enlistment shilling. The temperance reformation is the consecration of a life to the work of saving men lost to God, and to themselves, and to society, by intemperance; the dedication of heart and intellect to the task of securing a sober, a healthy, and a godly nation; and it means personal effort, the play of the forces of sympathy, the suasion of a powerful example, and is as truly the offspring of Christianity as the agencies for saving the heathen; and in the present state of British society, I feel that I should not be less, but more guilty of a violation of the law of God, if I were to hold myself aloof from this reforming movement, than if I agitated for the closing of Sunday-schools, and devoted my days to the suppression of missions to the heathen. To me the commandment is clear, “Thou shalt not hide thyself even in a pulpit from the duty of energetically and directly seeking the salvation of lost drunkards, and strenuously working to prevent their manufacture even on the smallest scale.”

2. But a hiding-place more thickly populated by Churches

and Christians than that of preaching the Gospel, is found in the follies, extravagances, intemperance of speech, and manifold mischiefs of temperance workers. “I never heard but one temperance speech yet,” said a minister to me, last Friday, “which was not offensive.” It is encouraging to know he had not heard many. I have a letter in my possession, in which one of the officers of a church says, “We have seen so many churches split up, and the cause of Christ so materially injured by the intemperance of abstainers, that we should hesitate long before inviting as a pastor a partisan of the tee-total movement.” That letter was addressed, as I happen to know, though the writer did not, to one that had fallen twice into the fatal snare of drunkenness, and had suffered much and long thereby, but was then regaining his position and power by the adoption of total abstinence.

If we plead guilty to any fragment of this indictment, it is not without recollecting that men with a prodigious aptitude for blunders and indiscretions abound. The sons of wisdom are rather scantily distributed on this planet. We have heard folly elsewhere than on the platforms of temperance reformers. Ignorance and bitterness are by no means respecters of persons. Even pulpits are not always bolted and barred against vain-glory. All deacons are not immaculate, and Sunday-school teachers occasionally stumble. But we call that man a coward who, on that account, slinks into a corner, and escapes the enobling responsibilities and sublime duties of Christianity. It is a rank injustice to judge all by a few, and condemn a cause and a principle because some blatant Diotropes has failed to govern his tongue, or some eager neophyte has started a disturbing controversy. “Revolutions are not made with rose-water.” Even Paul was charged with turning the world upside down; but it was by men who objected to have it right side up, with its open face receiving the light and love of the Father. Why, this shallow fault-finding spirit would have closed the door of the world on Christ, and forbidden His entrance amongst us; for He came wielding a sword, and was the occasion of “bitter controversies” in the organised religion of His day. No! we must take men and institutions on this earth with their imperfections, and for the general sum of good they give us. Like Newton, we must throw ourselves on the truth, and

say, “ There is no contending against facts.” The Gospel as incarnated in the Temperance Reformation is now a mighty and impressive fact, as much so as gravitation, though in a different sphere. Its principles are vindicated by science, philosophy, and experience; and its history justifies the answer, “ It may be some temperance men are foolish, and others vain, and others idiotic; but the principle is right, the policy is effective, and the practice is urgent.” Our wisest course is to imitate Paul, who did not hide himself from preaching Christ because some preached of envy and some of strife, but rejoiced that, notwithstanding the faults and foibles of preachers, Christ was preached, and went with a heartier zest and lighter spirit to his own special tasks. Thou mayest not hide thyself in the follies and extravagancies of men who seek to do with less light and gifts the work in which you, too, are bound to engage.

IV. Briefly let us now test the neglect of opportunities of neighbourly help by the principles contained in our text. And first, thou mayest not hide thyself, for it is a violation of that *law of love*, obedience to which sanctifies all the relations of our social life, sweetens the breath of society, and makes existence a bright and gladsome thing. The Church of Christ not only enters into the heritage of Israel in “ the two great commandments,” but owes at once its existence and the maintenance of its power and impressiveness to the exercise of this self-sacrificing affection. It is a spiritual institution for the promotion of goodness, kindness, gentleness, sympathy, trouble-taking, and affectionate help for men. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Self-renouncement in loving work for the needy—for the most needy—is the law of the kingdom of heaven, the condition of individual joy and peace, and the source of abiding usefulness. The spirit of unselfish service is the spirit of Christ—the spirit that saves the world. How, I ask, can such a spirit see the desolations wrought by drink in England, and not sigh for opportunities of service, for occasions of self-sacrifice? How is it likely that, filled with the love of Christ for men, we should stay in our hiding-places and refuges, and suffer our brethren to stumble and fall? Seeing as we do that it is a question of life and death,

and of eternal life and eternal death, our love for souls will not let us rest till we have struck every blow, and dared in exhausting work, even to the point of death, to release these long-imprisoned men and bring them to the light of the day of Christ. If thou hast love for Christ and men thou mayest not hide thyself from strenuous and soul-absorbing work to demolish the strongholds of drink.

2. Neglect is also a violation of *the law of social responsibility*. One says, "If I dwelt in St. Giles's, and knew that my influence would affect the people who suffer most, I would take sides with you." Indeed ! is that your definition of the word "brother"—that your idea of influence? Are these the scales in which you weigh your responsibility? How know you that you can keep your "influence"—that which "flows" from your life "into others"—within the four walls of your house? It is as sure to get out as the air is sure to get in. It finds a telegraphy ready in your servants, your friends, your acquaintance, and away it goes, invisibly and certainly, till it reaches—yes, reaches—St. Giles's. Influence is the most subtle and delicate of forces. The gold leaf of the electrometer will register the slightest electrical disturbance produced by bringing a knife and fork together in cutting a slice of beef; but we have no gold leaf to indicate the movements of our moral influence. We cannot say a wrong, a mean, a lascivious word, and then stop its influence. We cannot neglect a duty and bar up the results of our neglect within ourselves. We have power to make alive, but not to kill—to create forces that work in separateness from us, but not to terminate them. "The evil that men do lives after them." It is an energy. No break is patented that will arrest the march of a living human deed. We may not hide ourselves, then, from a single responsibility ; we are charged with the stewardship of our brethren, and woe to us if we fail in our trust !

3. To *hide oneself from a neighbour's need*, and from a deed of neighbourly kindness, is cowardly, and God hates cowardice, howsoever it is cloaked, and has the strongest aversion to the spirit that goes to Joppa when the command is to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. To neglect duty in a weak or shuffling way, and from a mere love of ease and

pleasure, is a special offence to the Searcher of all hearts. He prefers opposition to cowardice. Christ prays for His murderers, but speaks of the Laodicean professors, who were neither hot nor cold, in language of inexpressible loathing and disgust. God would have us take sides, and make it clear where our sympathies and preferences are. He calls “for valiant-hearted men, who are not afraid to die,” for men of noble intrepidity, who never seek to divide responsibility by delay, or by shifts and doubts and excuses; who accept a plain and leading conviction, and work on it, following it wherever it points, seizing upon present duty and discharging with all the soul and mind and strength the task that is nearest to hand. Only cowards *hide* when duty gives its summons.

4. The hiding policy is the wrong policy. So long as the Church of Christ hides herself from this work, she is suffering her own direct work of saving men to be seriously hindered. She allows the stumbling-stones to remain in her path. The lost ox strays into the neighbour’s garden, and makes it a waste. The thistle-down of the world blows into the vine-yard of the Lord, and gives rise to a fateful crop. Ministers are smitten by this evil in the high places of the field. Officers are paralysed in power and service. Evangelistic effort is blighted. Missions are shorn of much of their glory, and robbed of much of their success. A pyramid of money, every coin of which the Church needs, is melted year by year. The Church of Christ is the greatest sufferer of all from national intemperance, and to save herself and her works she should come forth and deal direct and decisive blows.

Thus God approaches us in this commandment with a four-fold plea—one for the heart’s love, another for the conscience; another for our dread of shame and cowardice, and a fourth for our interest in our work and its eternal issues.

No more hiding, then! Let Christians everywhere show their colours, and proclaim themselves the determined and relentless antagonists of the drinking customs of the day. Restraine and restrict the enormously overgrown traffic in intoxicants. Make the laws of the State favourable to sobriety and not to intemperance. Heed science and teach

it is as to the laws of health and the nature and effects of stimulating drinks. Save the drunkard. Inculcate sobriety. Train the young in abstinence. Carry the whole weight of your influence, of your word and example, to the side of a sober and a healthy and a godly people. "Thou mayest not hide thyself."

Years ago Holland was threatened with extinction by the waters of the ocean; cities and towns and fields seemed as if they were about to be the prey of the sea, but the sturdy Hollanders resolved to save their country. They built their vast dykes, kept back the ocean, and saved the people. Those dykes remain to this day—the monuments of a brave daring, and a wise foresight. The sea of intemperance is surging around us. It threatens to engulf us. Let us rise in our God-given might, and build our dykes right early, so that we may save ourselves, our country, and our race. Thou shalt not hide thyself!

THE CLAIMS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE

ON THE

EDUCATED CLASSES.

It ought to be, and it is, with some trepidation that I rise to address a highly distinguished, and, I think, impatient audience on a greatly disparaged cause. The secular press tells us that the advocates of total abstinence are impracticable fanatics, and wrong-headed pharisees ; the religious press tells us that abstinence is a much poorer stage of virtue than moderation, and that by declining wine and beer we fall far below the attainment of those moral athletes, who, to their hearts' content, indulge themselves in both ; even clergymen in their sermons, and at the Church Congress, argued that we are despising a good creature of God, setting ourselves against a precept of St. Paul, and cherishing a heresy which is dangerously akin to that of the ancient Manichees. Well, if a cause had no opponents, I, for one, should think it a grievous waste of time to be among its advocates ; and the only thing that would reconcile me to the uncongenial task of speaking on the subject, is the knowledge that it is unpopular and decried. And as for these arguments, we have had them addressed to us again and again, and you must pardon me if the utter intellectual disdain with which I regard them prevents me from doing more than allude to them to-day. They remind me of nothing so much as the victims of Mr. Punch, in the now rare street show, which used to delight our childish days. It is perfectly useless for that hero to knock them on the head and bang them on the floor ; they show a wooden vitality which is perfectly inexhaustible. No matter how violently used—they have been dashed down and finished off by a final rap—they are sure to stand up a moment afterwards, wagging their futile heads and shaking

their minatory arms ; and, long after they have been finally disposed of, their ghosts reappear, with an exasperating pertinacity. Now as to these objections, if anybody likes to call me Manichæan because I have become an abstainer, I can only assure him, with a smile, that I should like him, to the same extent, to adopt the same beneficent heresy. If, in spite of arguments which daily gain in overwhelming cogency, he tells us that alcohol in moderation is harmless, it is still no more a special duty of mine to drink it than it is a special duty of mine to feed, for instance, on Revalenta Arabica. If I prove to him that to millions of human beings it is not only deleterious, but deadly, I say that to them, and to those who wish to help and save them, it is no more a good creature of God than laudanum or strychnine. And as to the so-called Scriptural arguments in favour of drunkenness—I beg pardon, I mean in favour of moderate drinking, which is, however, ultimately, the *fons et origo* of drunkenness—I shall say this only, that wine means primarily the juice, and often, as I believe, the unfermented juice of the grape ; and that the drugged beers, and stupefying porters, and fortified ports, and plastered sherries, and abominable draughts of liquid fire that are called spirits in England, are no more the pure fruit of the vine than the mariner's compass is intended when we are told that St. Paul fetched a compass and came to Rhegium. Into that Scriptural matter I have no time at present to enter, and, indeed, to do so would be perfectly superfluous to an audience intelligent enough and educated enough to distinguish between the dead letter and the living spirit ; and to observe that those who defend dram-drinking out of Timothy are the sworn brothers of those who defend slavery out of Philemon. But those who oppose us on false deductions from Scripture do not stand alone in resuscitating their slain objections. There is your senator, entrenched in his impregnable aphorism "that you cannot make people sober by Act of Parliament," who is best met by the direct denial that to a very great extent you can make people sober by Act of Parliament ; and by the entreaty that senates, if they cannot make people sober, should at least not continue the very effective means to prove that you can by Act of Parliament make them drunken. There is your man of the world, who asks you what all the noise is about, and why you don't leave him alone, and who is indeed best

left alone, since our arguments are only intelligible to the unselfish and the earnest. There is your defender of the British Constitution, who asks how you can interfere with the liberty of the subject? to which I answer, with J. S. Mill, that the liberty of one man ends where, however profitable to himself, it becomes fatal and ruinous to another; and with Archbishop Whately, "that I will gladly curtail any liberty if thereby I can restrain another's licence." And then, lastly, there is a very important person indeed, your political economist. You tell him that we are squandering £150,000,000 a year directly (and how awful a sum indirectly is known to God alone) in that which he may regard as a harmless luxury, but which we see to be a frightful curse to millions, and which we believe to be in a greater or less degree injurious to all, and what does he do? First, he nibbles at the figures, talks about exaggeration; and, without saying one word about the indirect cost to this nation of alcohol, says that its direct cost is after all "only" £131,000,000, and that of this the working classes spend "only" £38,000,000, and that this is "only" equivalent to what they spend in rent; and that £87,000,000 of the whole sum spent are not lost, because they go in duty to the Exchequer and in profits to the liquor trade. Well, I am not a professor, and perhaps it may be only my ignorance, but I confess that this is a political economy which fairly astounds me. It reminds me of nothing so much as the answer given, it is said—but let us hope by an Oxford undergraduate—to the question, "What are the chief sources of revenue to the Shetland Isles?" and who answered that "the inhabitants earned an honest but somewhat precarious subsistence by washing one another's clothes." But, seriously, supposing that this £131,000,000—for in this amazing bill we will not quarrel about a million or two more or less—were spent, not in alcohol, but in fireworks? Would it be an argument to any one who complained that this was a fearful waste to say that the working classes "only" spent £38,000,000 of it; that fireworks amused them; and that £87,000,000 of it was not lost, because it went in duty to the revenue, and in profits to the pyrotechnist? It is surely an amazing conception of national advantage which makes it consist in the mere circulation of money spent on unproductive labour; and anyone who knows anything whatever about the temperance question, knows that the grounds

on which we brand as waste this vast consumption of our resources, are grounds for which we at least offer a daily increasing mass of proof, viz., that alcohol is not a food ; that it is not a source of warmth ; that it is not a source of strength ; that it cannot even conceivably be a necessity, seeing that our thousands of prisoners gain in health and strength, instead of losing, by its total withdrawal ; that there are whole races of men who never touch it ; and that the total abstainers of England, who now number four millions, are among the healthiest of men ; and that while it is thus absolutely needless, the abuse of it is confessedly and demonstrably the curse and shame of England, both at home and abroad, the most fertile and the most potent of all existing causes of degradation and ruin. Well, if these things be so—and whether they are so, you cannot judge at all till you have at least faced the evidence—then, I say, deliberately and distinctly, that England would be a richer country, a better country, a happier country, a country in all respects more blessed, if alcoholic drinks were non-existent, and if £150,000,000 were spent annually on fireworks instead ; for this, among other reasons, because the puffing away of that magnificent revenue in smoke and flame would not only do us less direct harm, but would also save us from the vast loss caused indirectly to the nation by the occupation, for hops, of 69,000 acres of our soil ; by the destruction, for beer and spirits, of 12,000,000 bushels of grain ; and by the crushing expense of all the pauperism, the lunacy, the crimes, the accidents, the burnt houses, the wrecked ships, the exploded collieries, the shattered railway trains, which can be traced directly to drink alone. Now I will tell you why I speak of total abstinence. I am bidden to-day to point out the claims of the temperance movement on the public schools and Universities, and if by the temperance movement be merely meant the discountenancing of drunkenness, surely to speak about it would be needless. I suppose that no one here will be likely to act, as I once saw a gentleman act, who sat at a meeting and did not blush to applaud the disgraceful facts and alarming statistics of intemperance. To such a one we could only say—

“Well spoken advocate of sin and shame
Known by thy bleating, Ignorance thy name.”

But I need hardly say that no man would have any shadow of a right to the titles of a Christian and a gentleman—nay, he would brand himself as an enemy to his race—if he did not join heart and soul in the wish to check intemperance. If that were all, it would be an insult to your understandings to argue with you that the temperance movement has claims upon you. Of course it has claims upon every living man in whose breast beats a human heart. But I shall take the unpopular, quixotic side, and ask you to consider whether total abstinence has no claims upon you.

I shall not say—I have never said—that it is your duty, or any man's duty, to take so far upon yourself the vow of the Nazarite, but I shall humbly ask for your unprejudiced consideration, and I shall leave to yourselves the manly decision, while I beg you for a few moments to glance at the question with me—first, in its personal, and then in one only of its social aspects. Let me begin with the very lowest ground of all. I look around me, and I am every day more deeply impressed with the increasing severity of the struggle for life and the immense difficulty of gaining a livelihood experienced by thousands of boys and youths of the upper and professional classes, and I ask whether under such circumstances it is not worth a young man's time to make his condition of life as simple as possible, and to save himself, by a very trivial self-denial, from a very needless and burdensome expense? I tell my poor people that one single pint of beer a day means at least £3 a year; that three pints a day, which is in most of these families a very moderate allowance, means £9 a year out of their wages, and that would in twenty years, with interest, become no less than £257, which would buy them a freehold house and garden. I surely may say to many of you, who will hereafter not find it so easy to keep the wolf from the door, taking this very lowest, yet not unimportant ground, that even four glasses of sherry a day in a household means some ten dozen bottles a year, and that even in a small and struggling clergyman's family of a few people some £20 can very ill indeed be spared. The day may come when you will not think this a trivial sum. But, trivial or not, it is undesirable if it be a waste, and it is foolish if people are better without it. Now this at least is certain—that to a young and a healthy man alcohol in any form is needless, even if it be not injurious. Dr. Brunton and Dr. Burdon Sanderson, and Sir W. Gull are none of them total abstainers, and the first two are distinctly unfavourable to total abstinence, yet Dr. Brunton says before the Lords' Committee, "If a man eats well and sleeps well, he does not want it, and is better without it." Dr. Burdon Sanderson says, "It is not at all required in health"; and Sir William Gull says "that the constant use of alcohol, even in moderation, injures the nervous tissues, and is deleterious to health." I could quote to you on the same side the distinctest evidence of Sir H. Thompson, of Dr. Norman Kerr, of Dr. B. W. Richardson, of more than 2,000 physicians in 1846, and of an ever-increasing number of eminent medical men; but I greatly prefer, and I am quite content to rest it on the spontaneous, the unbiased, often the most unwilling testimony, of those who are in no way pledged to total abstinence, and are even in some cases distinctly hostile to it. So much for the score of health; and what about strength? You desire to be athletes. Well, I venture to say to you that you will be all the better and stronger athletes if you are total abstainers. When Captain

Webb swam the Channel, and Weston walked his thousand miles, and Adam Ayles, the Arctic explorer, got nearest the North Pole, they did it without a drop of stimulants ; and I dare say that you have already found out for yourselves that, as Dr. Burdon Sanderson says, "Alcohol is specially injurious in continuous muscular exertion." And then as to mental work. Many of you desire to be students and scholars. Will alcohol help you ? Sir Henry Thompson says, "That of all people I know who cannot stand alcohol, the brain-worker can do so least." Sir William Gull tells us that alcohol degenerates the tissue and spoils the intellect. Many a man has ruined a fine intellect, as Macaulay tells us that Lord Byron did, by ardent spirits and Rhenish wine ; many a man has polluted with the strange fires of alcohol the vertical flame on the altar of genius, but in spite of all devils' proverbs to the contrary, no man has ever yet improved it, and the "*vino forma perit, vino consumitur cetas,*" is as true now as it was in the days of Propertius nearly 2,000 years ago. I could go on heaping proof on proof that even if alcohol be not positively harmful, even if it do not tend to weaken and degrade the physical organisation, it is at the very best a needless and questionable luxury, and, therefore, one which a young man might, I think, very reasonably despise. But I have something more serious to say. In speaking of the purely personal aspect of the question, I have only glanced at its physical, and have not so much as touched on its moral and spiritual aspects. Now, as regards these, my own belief is that alcohol does tend (if taken very moderately, it may be only in an infinitesimal degree, but still does tend) to excite the lower, and to neutralise the spiritual elements of our nature, and that in myriads who stop far short of being drunkards it blunts the moral sensibilities and enslaves the enervated will. And although millions never succumb to their influences, yet millions also do. Do you suppose that there was ever a drunkard since the world began who dreamt when he first began to "quaff the foaming vintage of Champagne in silver goblets, tossed," or to do any of the other fine things which our Bacchanalian songs so fatally belaud, that he too would fall into the shame and misery of the drunkard ? From the day when Noah planted a vineyard and ate of the fruit thereof—nay, it may be even from the days of Eden, if, as the Rabbis say, the vine was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—from the days when the two sons of Aaron perished at the altar in their intoxication—numberless of the miserable have experienced the fatal physical fact that as long as a drop of alcohol remains in the system it creates a desire for more, and the fatal moral fact that evil habit first allures, then masters and finally maddens and enslaves. At the entrance of one of our college chapels lies a nameless grave—that grave covers the mortal remains of one of its most promising fellows ruined through drink. I received not long ago a letter from an old

schoolfellow, a clergyman, who after long labours was in want of clothes and almost of food. I inquired the cause : it was drink. A few weeks ago a wretched clergyman came to me in deplorable misery, who had dragged down his family with him into ruin. What had ruined him ? Drink ! While I was at Cambridge, one of the most promising scholars when a youth, years ago, died in a London hospital of delirium tremens, through drink. When I was at King's College I used to sit next to a handsome youth who grew up to be a brilliant writer. He died in the prime of life, a victim of drink. I once knew an eloquent philanthropist who was a very miserable man. The world never knew the curse which was on him, but his friends knew it was drink. And why is it that these tragedies are daily happening ? It is through the fatal fascination, the seductive sorcery, of drink, against which Scripture so often warns. It is because drink is one of the surest of "the devil's ways to man, and of man's way to the devil." It is because the old Greek imagination hit upon a frightful truth when it surrounded the car of Bacchus with half-human satyrs and raving mænads. "I must take care," wrote a great and good man the other day, "for I find myself getting an ugly craving for alcohol," and what is such a remark but an unconscious comment on Milton's noble lines :—

"Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed
Skirting the Tyrrhene shore as the wind listed
On Circe's island fell. Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the sun, whose charmed cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?"

Which things are simply this allegory, that he who loves wine is driven, as the wind lists, into a realm of sorcery, and that this sorcery culminates in utter degradation. But you, it may be, are quite sure that you will never fall on Circe's island, or unmould reason's mintage. But why are you so sure ? Is your nature so much stronger and nobler than that of Burns, or than that of Hartley Coleridge, or than that of Charles Lamb, with his sad cry, "The waters have gone over me. But out of the depths, could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have but set a foot in the perilous flood" ? Or why are you safer than all those 600,000 drunkards in these unhappy islands—many of them men of keen intellect, many of them men of noble instincts ; many of them men of most amiable character ? How did these men become drunkards ? Do you think that they were born drunkards ? Do you think that they became drunkards the moment they tasted alcohol ? Why, you know that there is only one way by which any man ever became a drunkard, and that is by growing fond of alcohol, at first in moderate drinking—either by the glass or by

the dram—day by day a little increased—year by year a little multiplied, by the solitary becoming the frequent, and the frequent the habitual, and the habitual the all but inevitable transgression, till at last some fine morning as they awake, perhaps in the shame of some intolerable fall—it came upon them with a flash that they are drunkards ; or else they have been moderate for years, and then at last, when they thought themselves perfectly secure, the temptation has come upon them “terrible and with a tiger’s leap”—in the delight of some boon companionship, in the exhilaration of some good fortune, in the agony of some unexpected bereavement. Gentlemen, if every one of you think yourselves so absolutely and so permanently safe from a temptation to which so many millions have succumbed, or if you think that, being absolutely safe yourself, no single person towards whom you have duties and whom you love, nor wife, or child, or friend, or servant, or parishioner, can by any possibility be ever tempted by your example, all that I can say is that, while I cannot share your confidence, I must earnestly trust that no bitter irremediable experience may ever give you cause to repent of it in dust and ashes. But now I will pass from the personal to the social aspect of the question. It has been said that if you are fond of wine you ought to abstain for your own sake ; and if you are not fond of wine, you ought to abstain for the sake of others. That may be only an epigram ; but yet I do say that if you would disprove all that I have as yet said to you, I should say still be a total abstainer for the sake of others. For even the veriest idiot must admit that one evil at least comes from drink—one evil colossal and ruinous—one evil immediately and directly, and therefore in some cases necessarily—and that is drunkenness, the national drunkenness of this country. It makes my cheeks blush for shame, it makes my heart beat fast with indignation, when I think that this precious, this immortal England of ours is itself one of the most drunken nations and perhaps the greatest cause of drunkenness in other nations, of all under God’s sun. Drunkenness, I grieve to say—for it is a masterstroke of the power of evil—is too often treated as laughable. Continually it is made a subject of jest in our comic newspapers, and no one can live in London without noticing that it is the favourite jocosity of those wretched comic songs, those deplorably abysmal degradations of all verse and all music, which flow like a stream of vitriol from detestable music-halls over the morals of the boys and girls, which in our schools and classes we have striven to win to God. Well, I cannot laugh at these jests. I can look with disgust and abhorrence on these songs. Have you ever seen—if not, may you never see—a young man suffering from delirium tremens ? from attempting to describe its horrors I shrink appalled ; but you are probably all aware that one of the features of delirium tremens is all kinds of illusions and phantoms. A friend of mine told me the other day that, finding himself in

London, he turned into a tavern for some lunch. As he sat there a dog suddenly ran across the room, and my friend started. "Oh, don't be afraid, sir," said the waiter, coming up to him, "It was a dog ; it was a real dog, I assure you." At first he could not understand what the man meant ; but then it flashed on him with a thrill of horror, that this man, in his own person, and in the person of his customers, was familiar with the ghastly illusion of that most terrible of all diseases which is God's Nemesis upon excess. This being but one of the horrors of that drunkenness which has its direct and sole origin in drink—are you a Christian, are you a man, can you have a heart in your breast which selfishness has not quite eaten away, if you can hear without shame and sorrow that, to say nothing of the grocers' licenses, there are 98,955 public-houses in England, and that there is scarcely one of these which is not to some a direct inevitable source of terrible temptation ; that there are 38,845 beer-shops in England, of which there is scarcely one which is not a direct source of demoralisation in the neighbourhood ; that in the year 1875 there were in England alone 203,989 arrests for drunkenness, and 122,913 arrests for assaults, many of these of the loathliest and diabolically brutal character, connected with drunkenness ; making the ghastly total of 826,902 offences on the score of this sin alone, which yet does not represent one-tenth part of the shame, the ruin, the misery, the loss, the burden, which are directly due to this awful sin. The drunkard, as I have said, is often in his sober moments a high-minded and honourable man, and no amount of physical torture can equal the anguish of moral degradation, in which he knows what he is, and loathes what he is, and yet is what he is by a deadly spell which he cannot break. Drunkards have been known to describe the horror and intensity of this spell, by saying that if a glass of brandy were before them, and between them and it yawned the very abyss of hell, they still must stretch forth their hands and take it. And the worst of all is the knowledge that these unhappy victims transmit to their children an hereditary craving of which, though unacquainted with it, they cannot conceive the terrible intensity. Imagine the case—alas ! in the lower classes the very common case !—of the poor unhappy youth, born with this awful tendency, conscious of it, afraid of it, yet not sufficiently braced in moral self-discipline to prevent it from becoming first an allurement, then a master, then the tyranny of a remorseless demon. Imagine a man—and such cases are—a man so unhappily constituted by the sin of his father, that, for long, long years, from boyhood to the very verge of old age, the soul within him has "to stand and watch like an unsleeping sentinel," lest at any moment the burning congenital appetite for strong drink should clutch him with hands of fire, and drag him down into the unspeakable horror of the drunkard's grave. Well, it is on behalf of those drunkards that I appeal to

you ; and not for their sakes only, but for the sake of their little sons and their little daughters, and for the sake of the myriads of those white young souls which are being at this moment trained in our national schools, and of which nearly all will have to wrestle with this as one of their sorest temptations, and of which many a thousand, if not saved and shielded, will most inevitably fall. Remember, I entreat you, that the drunkards of to-day are not the drunkards of to-morrow ; that this ignoble and inglorious array of drunkards, as its ranks are thinned by death, is being daily recruited by those who as yet are not drunkards, but who only drink. For myself, supposing that considerations like these had not already induced me to take the pledge, I venture to say that if I were in this hall hearing these facts, and if I knew that in this hall there were but one youth or man who would hereafter fall into this horrible abyss, then I should feel it would be well worth the sacrifice of every one of us in taking the pledge, if by so doing we could but save that one ; it might be a personal blessing to everyone of us ; but even, if not, yet how small would be our loss, how great his gain, and I should think that we were but acting in the spirit of that great apostle who said that he would neither eat meat nor drink wine, nor anything whereby his brother was made to offend. I have not said, I never shall say, a word against the publicans. I have not said, and never shall say, that it is the duty of any man, not being a drunkard, to take the pledge. But I do say that this is a plain fact—namely, that drunkenness comes of moderate drinking, and that if, as a nation, we could make the vow of abstinence all but universal amongst us, then drunkenness, at any rate, with all its fearful consequences, would be erased from its horrible prominence in the list of our national sins. To me it seems that there is only one remedy which can indefinitely prolong the national glory of England ; there is but one resource which can counteract the dangers which threaten us from the pressure of life, the depression of trade, the growth of a deeply-seated discontent ; there is but one way to diminish the ghastly total of crime, to close two-thirds of our asylums, two-thirds of our workhouses ; and that remedy, that resource, that way, is that instead of continuing to be a drunken, we should become a sober and temperate nation, and in the present distress, amid the present perils, with the present repeated refusals of the Legislature to interfere with the scandalous multiplication of temptations, there is but one way by which we can ever become a sober and temperate nation, and that is by the immense, the voluntary, the all but universal spread of total abstinence. And, meanwhile, do not be deceived by easy self-satisfaction, by a mere talking about rosewater remedies which become practically an excuse for simply doing nothing. People solemnly tell us that we must not fight drunkenness, but must give the poor higher amusements, better houses, more education, and so

make them sober. I have seen something of the poor, and I tell you emphatically that in our present state of things these remedies will not diminish drunkenness. No one can desire more ardently than I do that all this should be done ; no one feels more indignantly than I do the selfish apathy of rich men, who draw rents for filthy houses where the poor are huddled together like swine ; no one can believe more entirely than I do that in general more education means less vice. But, I say, first diminish drunkenness and then try these remedies, or you will be utterly defeated :—

“ What, have ye let the fond enchanter 'scape ?
Oh ye mistook ! ye should have seized his wand
And held him fast. Without his rod, reversed
And backward, mutters of dissevering power,
Ye cannot free the lady who sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless ! ”

And this total abstinence, this is the seized wand, the rod reversed, the backward mutters of dissevering power. Without this all the boons you give to the poorer classes will be gradually turned into banes ; with it the boons will come and come far more effectually of themselves. And this is emphatically the work, emphatically the reform, which this age has to achieve ; and for those at any rate who work among the poor, total abstinence is the only way to do it. If the clergyman takes his glass of sherry, on the plea of fatigue and exhaustion, you may depend upon it that the working man will go, on the same pretext, to the publican for his glass of gin ; and if he reads his Shakespeare, he will say to the clergyman who wants to wean him from drunkenness—

“ But good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Point me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede.”

Gentlemen, our fathers had to go to the stake for freedom of conscience, and to shed their blood for civil liberty, and to bear opposition and obloquy in founding missions and reforming prisons and futhoring education and purging England from the infamies of the slave-trade. What we have to do, what this age has to do, what every brave and true and good man in this generation has to do, is to save England from the stain and shame, from the curse and ruin of drunkenness ; a curse far deadlier than that of neglected prisons—far deadlier than that of injured slaves. Will you do it ? or will you make the great refusal ? If you had to bear a little blatant ridicule in doing it, so much the better. If the people who extol the cheap and easy virtues of imbibing beer and wine pity you from the heights of their serene superiority,

tell them that this sort of virtue, which consists of doing what we like because we like it, is one which can never mount to the height of your disdain. Gentlemen, no reform worth having was ever carried except in the teeth of clenched antagonists ; and most reformers, though we build statues to them now, have had to

“ Stand pilloried on infamy’s high stage,
And bear the pelting scorn of half an age.”

And those who carry, or who help to carry this reform, they, too, will live in the grateful recollection of posterity. The name of Sir Wilfrid Lawson will be honoured when those of half our little politicians sleep in the dust of Hansard. The names of Canon Ellison and Canon Hopkins will be remembered when half the fuglemen of our petty schisms are consigned to fortunate oblivion. The name of Dr. Richardson will be honoured when the place of a hundred fashionable physicians knows them no more. Not for one moment do I, a late convert, whose attention was warily aroused to this question by a short experience of work among the London poor, presume to pluck the most withered leaf of that civic garland which, *ob cives servatos*, these gentlemen have so richly deserved ; but will not some of you who are young array yourselves in this great cause—continue this battle—take the place of us who already “ think with a diminished fire, and speak with a diminished force ”?

“ Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor ?”

It may be the fate of some of you to die before you have ever really, or in any high sense, lived. Some of you may become cynics in thought and pessimists in morals, and spend pernicious lives in trying—though you might as well try to throw dust at heaven and stain it—in trying to ridicule the faith and the aims of the saints of God ; some of you may sell your souls for vulgar successes, and pitch your tents on the dead levels of selfish respectability or the sluggish flats of base content ; but, oh, will none of you, sweeping aside the wretched sophismis which infest this question, see that sacrifice, borne not for self but for others, is always sacred ; and will you not, for the sake of the solidarity of man, give yourselves to that high task of social amelioration, of which this is the most pressing and the most important element ? “ Illi ” says the *Imitatio Christi*, “ illi sunt vere fideles tui qui totas vitas suas ad emendationem disponunt ; ” and surely the *emendatio* of God’s noblest nation is a work ever more sacred than the *emendatio* of ourselves. And at present there is no other way so brief, sc. essential, so emphatic as to show what you think by example as well as by precept, and by giving up what is at the very best an infinitesimal advantage to take your part against an infinite calamity. It may cost you a laugh in hall ; it may bring on you a sneer at a dinner-party ; but if you still be young,

it may save you, personally from a degrading peril ; and it will pledge you personally to a glorious cause. Many will tell you that the plan is Quixotic, Utopian, hopeless. These, gentlemen, are missiles of commonplace launched from the catapults of selfishness. I have generally observed that the cause at which they are levelled is generally a good cause, and almost always a cause which at last has won. But at any rate, this I do say, from the very deepest conviction, that if this be a hopeless cause, then the case of England is hopeless ; and if this be a losing battle, then the battle of England too is lost. But I prophesy that, on the contrary, it is a cause which will triumph, and a battle which shall be won. Give us the impetuosity of your youth, give us the glow of your enthusiasm, give us the freshness of your lives. Remember that the heroes and the demigods were they who rid the earth of monsters ; think of the monsters against which you have to fight ; the miseries from which you have to deliver ; the multitudes which you have to convince ; the banded interests which you must help to overthrow. There, in your light, lies the dark tower of vice and prejudice which you have to storm ; "The round squat turret blind as the fool's heart." God give some of you grace to help in the storming of it, were it ten times as impregnable as it is ! Many have died in the apparently forlorn hope of its assault ; but I will trust that there may even now be sitting listening among you one who will yet live to do it, and will, in a far less dangerous cause, make his vow in the spirit of the young knight in the great poem, surrounded by the phantoms of the lost adventurers, his peers :—

"There they stood, ranged along the hill-sides—set,
To see the last of me, a living flame
For one more picture. In a sheet of flame
I saw them, and I knew them all, and yet
Dauntless the slughorn to my lips I set,
And blew. Childe Roland to the dark tower came."

BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

"And he stood between the living and the dead; and the plague was stayed."—NUMB. xvi. 48.

ON previous Sundays, my brethren, I have endeavoured, at the request of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Evidence, to set before you "the Universe as a manifestation of God's eternal power and godhead," by showing you, first, that its beauty was a seal of the handiwork of its Creator; and then that neither in its illimitable vastness, nor in the steady uniformity of the laws which govern it, is there anything to shake, but rather very much to strengthen, our faith in God. Such truths may be deeply practical if we will make them so; if we will remember that this is the God whose eye is ever upon us; that "this God is our God for ever and ever, and shall be our guide unto our death." And such truths have also a deep bearing on the subject of which I am bidden to speak to-day. For if there be one thing which would stand out clearly from such a contemplation of the awfulness of God and yet the love which could send His own Son to die for us, it is the guilt involved in a wilful depravation of His work, the dreadful consequences which must follow—which, as a fact, are daily following—from the flagrant violation of His laws. Wilful sin, a wilful sacrifice of duty to self-indulgence; a wilful choice of the lower and baser instead of the higher and nobler, is disastrous in the individual; and pitiable indeed is the shipwreck which it causes to the hope and the happiness of life. But in the case of a nation, still more disastrous is the loss, still more overwhelming the shipwreck. Take the history of any nation under the sun; watch its rise and watch its ruin, and see whether, in every instance, its ruin has not been the retribution of its guilt. You may not be able to see exactly *why* it was, but you are forced to see that so it was; and the secular historian will tell you as emphatically as the theologian, that to every nation in its turn sin has meant, first, weakness, then decay, lastly, destruction.

What ruined Judah? In its first stage, idolatry; in its second stage, Pharisaism. What sapped the strength of Greece? Sensuality. What broke the iron arm of Rome? Again, sensuality joined with slavery. What ruined Spain? Avarice. What ruined Venice? Pride. What ruined the Papacy? Ambition. If ever England be ruined, what will be her ruin? Her national sin—whatever that national sin may be. And what is the national sin of England? Alas! there are many sins in England, but ask the unbiassed opinion of those who know; ask the unsuspected testimony of the English judges; ask the exceptional experience of the English clergy; ask the unguarded admissions of the English Press; and their unanimous answer would be, I think, as would be the unanimous answer of every thoughtful man in this vast assembly,—the national sin of England is drunkenness; the national curse of England is drink.

2. My brethren, it has been my duty more than once of late to speak of intemperance, and I am willing to bear the penalty. On this subject it is an imperative duty that the pulpit should not be always silent; but if I am not afraid to speak the truth, I do earnestly desire to speak truth only, and to speak that truth in love. Far from the sanctity of this place be vulgar exaggeration. This Abbey is sacred to Truth; sacred to Faith; sacred to Charity. Were I to say from this place one word that was unwarrantable, it would seem to me as though the immortal spirits of the great men whose memorials stand thick around us were frowning on me in disdain. But they would have still more cause to frown if I glozed over the truth with lies. To exaggerate is one thing; to be charged with exaggeration is quite another. There are, alas! aspects of this matter which it is impossible to exaggerate, and, though I shall touch only on facts admitted and undeniable, the worst facts are far too bad to be here spoken of at all. And if there be any here who are concerned in the maintenance of a trade from which flow such dangerous consequences, while I ask them to think over their responsibility, and of that strict and solemn account which they, as well as we, must one day give before the judgment-seat of Christ, they may rest assured that I speak of a system, not of individuals, and that, as I never have, so neither now will I, say one word which is meant to reflect painfully on them. But, knowing drunkenness to be a ruinous vice,

and seeing that the results which flow from it are of the darkest and most appalling character, I therefore desire to arrest—more and more to arrest—so far as I can, the attention of the people of England to this crying and wide-wasting evil. To the intemperate I am not speaking, though from my very soul I pity them ; nor to abstainers, to whom I can say nothing new ; but I do want every English man and woman in this Abbey, and every English-speaking man and woman whom, in any form, or by any means, these words can reach, to face the stern facts which I shall touch upon, to ask themselves how far they mean to be entangled in responsibility for them ; and how long they will, and why they will, look on such facts unmoved. How weak, alas ! are poor human words ; how timid poor human hearts ! But, oh ! if that Great Angel of the Apocalypse could speak, and if his voice were in the thunder's mouth, he could not speak too loud to warn England of the sin and misery which are in the midst of her—to urge her to shake out of her bosom this burning coal of fire.

3. "Woe," says Jeremiah, "woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower." The allusions to drunkenness in Scripture and in classical literature are not unfrequent. Yet drunkenness was not the prevalent sin of ancient times ; and an ancient Spartan, an ancient Roman, or an ancient Hebrew would have stared with contemptuous disgust at the sights which in Christian England are familiar as a jest. It was not that they were less prone to sin, but they were less pelted with temptation. Southern and Eastern nations have never been so drunken as Northern ; and ancient nations were ignorant of that deadly spirit which has wrought a havoc so frightful among us. The simple wines of antiquity were incomparably less deadly than the stupefying and ardent beverages on which £150,000,000 are yearly spent in this suffering land. The wines of antiquity were more like syrups : many of them were not intoxicant, many more intoxicant in but a small degree, and all of them, as a rule, only taken when largely diluted with water. The sale of these comparatively harmless vinous fluids did not bear the remotest resemblance to the drink trade among us, nor did the same ghastly retinue of evils follow in its train. They contained, even when undiluted, but four or five per cent. of alcohol, whereas some of our common wines contain seventeen per cent., and the

maddening intoxicants of Scotch and English cities contain the horrible amount of fifty-four per cent. of alcohol. Take but one illustration of the difference of ancient and modern days. Our blessed Lord when He lived on earth traversed Palestine from end to end. He saw many a sinner, and many a sufferer ; He saw the lepers, and healed them ; He saw weeping penitent women, and restored them to honour and holiness again ; there is not the slightest trace that he ever once witnessed that spectacle of miserable degradation, a drunken man, or that yet more pitiable spectacle of yet deadlier degradation, a drunken woman. He who scathed the obstinate formalism of the Pharisee ; He who flung into the sea with a millstone round his neck the corrupter of youthful innocence, what would He have said, what would He have felt, had He heard the shrieks of women beaten by drunken husbands ; had He seen little children carried into the hospital stricken down by their drunken mothers' senseless or infuriated hands ? Ah ! estimate these things as He would have estimated them, and then will you dare to sneer at those who for very shame, for very pity, for the mere love of their kind and country, cannot let these things be so ?

4. And alas ! my brethren, but for these ardent spirits England need not be a drunken nation ; for the day was when she was not a drunken nation. Listen, my brethren, to a page of your own history. In the reign of that great king, King Henry V., who enlarged this Abbey—in his army of heroic victors, the army of Agincourt—drunkenness was deemed an utter disgrace ; and King Henry was so impressed with the curse of it that he wanted to cut down all the vines in France. Not yet accustomed, as one has said. “to pour oil of vitriol on the roses of youth,” not yet accustomed to apply hot and rebellious liquors in the blood of her children, England at that day might have said to one or other of her then not numerous drunkards :—

“ I know thee not, old man ; fall to thy prayers.
 How ill white hairs become a fool and jester,
 I long have dreamt of such a kind of man—
 So surfeit-swell’d, so old, and so profane ;
 But, being waked, I do despise my dream,

 . . . And know the grave doth gape
 For thee thrice wider than for other men.”

The great antiquary, Camden, who lies buried there, says that in his day drunkenness was a recent vice ; and other writers say that “ We brought the foul vice of drunkenness from our wars in the Netherlands, as we had brought back the foul disease of leprosy from the Crusades.” In the bad reaction which followed the Restoration, when the people broke loose from the stern but noble bonds of Puritan restriction to plunge into abominable licence, the evil habit was enormously increased, and many a great statesman and great writer of the subsequent epoch—a Pitt, an Addison, a Bolingbroke, a Walpole, a Carteret, a Pulteney—shattered his nerves and shortened his life by drink. But it was about the year 1724, as we are told by the last historian of the eighteenth century, Mr. Lecky, from whose “ History of the Eighteenth Century ” I borrow some of these facts, that “ gin drinking began to affect the masses, and it spread with the rapidity and violence of an epidemic.” “ Small,” he says, “ as is the place which this fact occupies in English history, it was probably—if we consider all the consequences that have flowed from it—the most momentous in that eighteenth century,” because from that time “the fatal passion for drink was at once and irrevocably planted in the nation.” Yes, it was only some 150 years ago that there began the disastrous era of the dramshop and the gin-palace ; from that era ardent spirits began to madden the brain, to poison the blood, to brutalise the habits of the lowest classes. Distillation replaced the comparatively harmless wines of our forefathers by those poisonous draughts of liquid fire which are at this moment the scathing, blighting, degrading curse of myriads, the fellest and the foulest temptation with which our working classes have to struggle. The Jewish rabbis have a legend that, when the first vineyard was planted, Satan rejoiced, and said to Noah that he should have his account in the results ; and in truth the wine-cup, which poets so extol, is the cause, as Solomon has told us, of woes enough ; but if ever the spirits of evil hailed a potent ally with shouts of triumph, it must have been when that thing was discovered which, regarded as a harmless luxury by the virtuous, acts as a subtle and soul-destroying ruin of the unsuspecting—that thing in the use of which “ intemperance, the great murderer of millions, doth creep for shelter into houses of moderation.”

5. But to return to history. Ardent spirits had not long been introduced when the Grand Jury of Middlesex, in a powerful presentment, declared that much the greatest part of the poverty, the robberies, the murders of London, might be traced to this single cause. Painted boards informed the poor that for 1d. they might purchase drunken stupefaction, and, as though the adjuncts of the sty were necessary to complete the accessories of truly swinish degradation, the straw in the cellars was gratuitously supplied. Even the morals of the eighteenth century—bad as they were—did not so acquiesce in this public demoralisation as we, with our consciences seared with the hot-iron of custom, are content to acquiesce. In 1736 a strenuous attempt was made to stem the rising tide of shame and ruin, by placing prohibitive duties on all spirituous liquors. In 1743 those duties were enormously diminished—partly on the futile plea of stopping illicit distillation, but mainly to replenish the Exchequer for the German wars of George II. Against the Gin Act, as it was called, Lord Chesterfield, the most polished and brilliant peer of his day, flung his whole influence, alas, in vain ! When I quote his words to you, remember that you are listening to a professed man of the world, perfectly cool-headed, the mirror of fashion, the idol of society, yet speaking simply as a patriot from ordinary observation of the notorious effects of what he calls “the new liquor.” Had he used such language now he would have been called an intemperate Pharisee ; but he spoke to an age not yet hardened by familiarity to the horrors of dram-drinking. “Vice, my lords,” he said, “is not properly to be taxed, but to be suppressed ; and heavy taxes are sometimes the only means by which that suppression can be attained. Luxury, my lords, may very properly be taxed. But the use of those things which are simply hurtful—hurtful in their own nature, and in every degree—is to be prohibited. If their liquors are so delicious that the people are tempted to their own destruction, let us at length, my lords, secure them from these fatal draughts by bursting the vials that contain them. . . . Let us crush these artists in human slaughter, which have reconciled their countrymen to sickness and to ruin, and spread over the pitfalls of debauchery such baits as cannot be resisted. . . . When I consider, my lords, the tendency of this bill, I find it calculated only for the propagation of disease, the suppression of industry,

and the destruction of mankind. For this purpose, my lords, what could have been invented more efficacious than shops at which poison may be vended, poison so prepared as to please the palate, while it wastes the strength and kills only by intoxication?" So spoke, so thought Lord Chesterfield, about the ardent spirits which are now sold on every day in the week at 140 licensed houses within a small radius of the Abbey, into most of which hundreds of men, of women, and of children, will enter this very day. And he did not stand alone. If you would know what your fathers thought of these things, look at Hogarth's ghastliest pictures of Rum-lane and Gin-alley. If you doubt Art, take the testimony of Science. In 1750 the London physicians drew up a memorial to the effect that there had been 14,000 cases of fatal illness attributable to gin alone; and Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, wrote, "Our people have become what they never were before, cruel and inhuman. These accursed liquors, which, to the shame of our Government are so easily to be had, have changed their very nature"; and about the same time the entire bench of bishops protested against the Gin Act, as founded on the "indulgence of debauchery, the encouragement of crime, and the destruction of the human race."

6. It was amid these protests of men and these warnings of God that in England the shameful and miserable tale began. You know, or you may know, and you ought to know, how it has gone on. The extent, indeed, of the calamity you do not and cannot know. That can be fully known to Him only who hears, and not in vain, the sighs and moans that lade the air with their quivering misery; to Him alone who can estimate the area of wreck and ruin, of human agony and human degradation, which is represented by the fact that this country spends £150,000,000 a-year on drink, and that in this country there are, besides the many who drink, 600,000 drunkards. No, you cannot estimate it: you have not even one fraction of such knowledge about it as we have who have seen it; but need you ignore it? Can you live in the very midst of facts so ugly and yet not lift a finger to make them better? Read for yourselves. Judge for yourselves. Refute these facts if you can; would to God that you could, but, alas! you cannot. Convince yourselves first that alcohol, however much you may like it, is needless, seeing that the lives of four million total

abstainers who never touch it are better in any insurance office than those of other men ; and that among our 20,000 prisoners—most of them brought there by it—there is, because they are not allowed to touch it, a better average healthiness than among any other class. Convince yourselves, then, that it is absolutely needless, and then judge yourselves of its effects. Do not take our testimony, but inquire. Go and catch with your own eyes a glimpse here and there of the black waves of this subterranean stream. Health is the most priceless boon of life. Go to our London hospitals, and ask how many are brought there by the awful diseases, the appalling accidents, the brutal violence of drink. Pauperism is the curse of cities ; ask poor law guardians how paupers are made ; ask any economist worth the name how pauperism can possibly be avoided when so much idleness is due to the £37,000,000—as much as all their rent—which, by the very lowest estimate, our poorest classes waste in drink. Lunacy is one of the worst inflictions of humanity ; ask at any public asylum the percentage of it due to drink. Idiocy is one of the saddest phenomena of life. Ask any doctor how many idiots are born of drunken parents. Visit our camps and barracks, and there is not an officer who will not tell you that drink is the deadliest curse of our army. Visit our ships and seaports, and there is not a captain who will not tell you that drink is the worst ruin of our sailors. Go to any parish in town or country, all over the United Kingdom, where there are many public-houses and many poor,—and any clergyman will tell you that drink is the most overwhelming curse of our working classes. Philanthropists sigh for the dirt, the squalor, the misery, of our lowest classes. How can it be remedied so long as there is the maximum of temptation, where there is the minimum of wages to waste and the minimum of power to resist ? Here, almost under the very shadows of the great towers of our Houses of Legislature, and within bowshot of this great Abbey, are streets in which house after house, family after family, is ruined or rendered miserable by this one cause ; and, oh ! how long will our Legislature still refuse to interfere ? Oh that we could show them the misery of the innocent, the imbruting of the guilty ; women broken-hearted, children degraded, men lowered beneath the level of the beasts ; holidays changed into a bane, high wages wasted into a curse, the day of God turned into a day of Satan, our gaols filled, our criminal classes recruited, our workhouses rendered inevitable. This it was which made the late Mr. C. Buxton say that “the struggle of the school, the library, and the Church were united, and united in vain, against the beershop and the gin-palace,” and that this struggle was “one development of the war between heaven and hell.” Have we not a right to expect, have we not a right to demand, that in this struggle the Legislature should take their part ?

7. Look at the statue of that glorious statesman who there

"with eagle-face and outstretched hand, still seems to bid England be of good cheer, and hurl defiance at her foes." Speaking of the proposal to use Indians against our American colonists, he burst into that memorable storm of words, which you all have read ; — "I call upon that Right Reverend Bench. I conjure them to join in the holy work and vindicate the religion of their God. I call upon the bishops," he said, "to interpose the unsullied sanctity of their lawn ; upon the learned judges to interpose the purity of ermine to save us from this pollution. I call upon your lordships to stamp upon it an indelible stigma of the public abhorrence. And I again implore those holy prelates of our religion to do away these iniquities from amongst us. Let them perform a lustration. Let them purify this house and this country from this sin." In his burning wrath of moral indignation, so stormed, so thundered the mighty Earl of Chatham, when it was proposed to let loose on our revolted colonists "the hellhounds of savage war." But against this hellhound of savage intoxication the bishops did then and the judges do now their very best to interpose. They, at least, can estimate, if any can, the connection of drink and crime. Have they failed to estimate it ? There is scarcely a judge on the bench who has not spoken of it, till it has become a commonplace of the Courts of Justice. "It is not from men that are drunk," said one judge, "but from men that have been drinking, that most of the crime proceeds." "The worst is," said another, "that men enter the public-house sober, and, leave it felons." But for drink, others have said again and again, "not one of these cases would have been brought before me." "Do away with drink," say others, "and we may shut up two-thirds of our prisons." So they have said—well-nigh every one of them—and still the maddening wave of alcohol flows on, and sweeps legislators into Parliament upon its crest. And are these judges fanatics ?—are they Pharisees ? Or is it that they are forced to see what every one of us might see if we chose—a fearful and intolerable fact ? The New Year dawned upon us five months ago with all its cheerful prophecies and jubilant hopes, and when it began I thought I would make a record of a few out of the thousands of awful crimes with which drink would blight and desecrate its history. Very soon I paused, sickened, horror-stricken. The crimes were too awful, to inhuman, sometimes too grotesque, in their pitiable horror. Other crimes are human crimes, but the crimes done in drink are as the crimes of demoniacs, the crimes of men who for the time have ceased to be men, and have become fiends. Oh ! that these walls should hear them. Oh ! that the angel of the nation might blot them out of his record with such tears as angels weep, to think that Christ, daily recrucified in the midst of us, should from His throne in heaven—

" See only this
After the passion of a thousand years."

I have some of them written here, but they are too black to tell you. Now it was a boy stabbing his father in a cellar in Liverpool ; now a wife killing her husband with one savage blow ; now a woman's suicide ; now a little infant overlaid ; now a drunken carman driving over a child, a woman, and a boy ; now a man—I dare not go on. I dare not describe the least bad, much less tell the worst. These things—these daily incidents of the year of grace 1878—Christian men and Christian women, are they unfit for your fastidious ears ? Ah ! but things are as they are, and it is not your fastidiousness that can undo them. And is it not an hypocrisy to shrink with delicate sensibility from hearing of crimes which are going on about you from day to day, and from week to week, and from year to year, while you do not shrink from the fact that they should be done, from the fact that they should be borne, by Englishmen like yourselves, done and borne by English women who might once have worn the rose of womanhood ; done and borne by boys and girls who were once little bright-eyed children in our schools, and who, but for drink, might have grown up as happy and as sweet as yours. And if you are ashamed that these things should be, why do many of you not lift up one finger to prevent this mingled stream of crime and pauperism from pouring its deluge through our streets ? For where are these things being done ? In savage islands ? among Pacific cannibals ? among ancient Pagans, such as St. Paul describes ? No, I declare to you that I find no records of such chronic horrors among them as I find, normally, daily, as incidents of ordinary life, as items of common news, happening now ; happening to-day ; happening in the midst of the nineteenth century after Christ ; happening in Christian England ; happening in Liverpool, in Dublin, in Glasgow, in Manchester ; happening here under your minster towers. Here even in these streets hard by—oh, what a tale I could tell—the husband imprisoned for assaulting his wife ; the son in gaol for striking his aged, miserable mother ; the father deserting his family of little children ; the son dishonouring his home ; the man once rich now ruined ; the woman barely snatched from agonising suicide. And, Christian men and Christian women, you wonder that our hearts are stirred within us when we see whole classes of a city—whole classes which should have been its marrow and its strength—thus given to drink ! When will this indifference cease ? When will a nation, half-ruined by her vice, demand what the Legislature will not then withhold ? Sooner or later it must be so, or England must perish. Weigh the gain and loss—strike the balance. On the one scale put whole tons of intoxicating and adulterated liquor—put alcohol, at the very best a needless luxury ; on the other side put £150,000,000 a year, and grain enough to feed a nation, and grapes that might have been the innocent delight of millions ; and load the scale—for you must, if you would be fair—load it with

disease and pauperism, and murder, and madness, and horrors such as no heart can conceive and no tongue tell ; and wet it with rivers of widows' and orphans' tears ; and if *you* will not strike the balance, God will one day strike it for you. But will you, as Christian men and Christian women—will you, as lovers of your country and lovers of your kind—stand up before high God, and say that the one is worth the other ? Will you lay your hand upon your heart, and say that these things ought so to be ?

7. I stop at England. The half, alas, is not told you ! The awful guilt remains that throughout all our colonies and dependencies, we, the proud race whose flag dominates the seas, and on whose empire the sun never sets—we, “wherever winds blow and waters roll, have girdled the world with a zone of drunkenness” ; until, as I think of it—as I think of the curses, not loud, but deep, muttered against our name by races which our fire-water has decimated and our vice degraded, I seem to shudder as there sounds in my ear the stern inquiry to our country, “These things hast thou done, and I held my peace ; and thou thoughtest wickedly that I was such an one as thyself ; but I will reprove thee, and set before thee the things that thou hast done,” and the menace of prophetic doom, “Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord ? and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ?”

8. But, oh ! will not some one interfere before it is too late ? Once in the camp of Israel there arose a wail of horror and of agony, “there is wrath gone out from the Lord ; the plague is begun” ; and, quick as thought, the High Priest Aaron took a censer, and put fire thereon from off the altar, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and put on incense, and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. Will no one do it now ? We are encircled by the immortal memorials of those who fought the slave-trade, and shattered the biblical and other sophisms of its defenders. In yonder aisle are the statues of Wilberforce and Raffles, and by the western door the liberated slave kneels, in immortal marble, by the deathbed of Fox, whose errors are forgotten, whose genius is ennobled, by his championship of that great cause—

“ Oh, God, for a man with head, heart, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by,
Some still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I ?
Aristocrat, autocrat, democrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie ! ”

Oh, for some man with the eloquence of these, and the same burning enthusiasm to redress the intolerable wrongs, to alleviate the needless miseries of man. Before the clear intellect, before

the fiery zeal of such a one, the flimsy sophisms of a pseudo-liberty, and the perverted pleas of a feeble literalism, would melt like tow at the breath of flame. Were it not better thus than to plunge into the heat of party squabbles, and win the evanescent triumphs of an hour? Will no one save a nation from multiplying, from legalising for itself a needless, an artificial, a self-created destruction? Oh, what a crown would such a man deserve! He would deserve a grander monument than Wellington's, a prouder statue than Chatham's self. The name, the memory of such a man should live when the names of many that are recorded here, and of most of the living statesmen who shall follow them, are covered with oblivion's dust. God grant us such a one to stand between the living and the dead, for the plague has indeed begun. They have been dying of it for two centuries; they are dying now, dying of disease, dying by violence, dying by suicide, dying in hospitals, dying in squalid garrets everywhere—strong men, miserable women, little children—dying so slowly that none call it murder. But if the drinkers cannot save themselves; if with their money they have drunk away their manliness, and with their sense of shame their power of will; shall not the nation save them—save them from themselves—save them from destroying temptation—save their wretched children, their wretched wives? The Legislature will not help us, because they tell us that as yet public opinion is not strong enough. Then in God's name let public opinion become strong enough! Let the working classes, who are mostly affected, take up this question. Let them snatch their order from this ruin. Let them cleanse it from this stain. What the senate refuses now, it cannot, it will not, it dare not refuse when a nation, knocking at its door with righteous and imperious demand, tells them that they are there to do its bidding. But as for us who are not senators, whose power is small, let us at least help to form this public opinion. Let us change this national sin of drunkenness into the national glory of self-control; let us become the Nazarites, as we have been the Helots, of the world. To hope for this has been called extravagant; nevertheless I do hope for it. If there are in England 600,000 drunkards, there are also in England, thank God, four million abstainers; and if without an iota of loss, and with an immensity of gain—if with stronger health, and clearer intellect, and unwasted means, to the great happiness of themselves, to the clear examples to others—there are *four* millions of every rank, and every position, and every degree of intellectual power, I, for one—believing noble things of man as I believe noble things of God—I for one do not see why there should not be *many* millions. But if we cannot and will not save ourselves, let us save our children. If the wealth and peace of this generation is to be a holocaust to drink, let the next be an offering to God. Let us, as Wellington said at Waterloo, let us have young soldiers. Let

every young man in his strength, every maiden in her innocence and beauty, join the ranks of the abstainers. Let the manliness of the nation spring to its own defence, so that by a sense of shame and a love of virtue, if this evil cannot be suppressed by law, it may perish of inanition. If so, I see no end to the greatness of England, no limit to the prolongation of her power. If not, in all history, as in all individual experience, I see but this one lesson—no nation, no individual, can thrive so long as it be under the dominion of a besetting sin. It must conquer or be conquered. It must destroy it or be destroyed by it. It must strike at the source of it or be stricken down by it into the dust.

It is matter, not of assertion, but of sternest demonstration, that the drink traffic causes the most amazing waste of our national resources; that to it are due, mainly and almost exclusively, the worst phenomena of pauperism; that it causes 75 per cent. of those melancholy cases of domestic ruin which fill our police courts; that it contributes enormously, both directly and indirectly, to the hideous social evil; that, but for it, on the testimony of nearly every judge on the bench, crimes of violence would well-nigh disappear; that it is the cause, both directly and indirectly, of a most terrible mortality; that it chokes our prisons, madhouses, and penitentiaries; that it creates an hereditary taint which makes life a curse to a stunted population; that because of it thousands, aye, tens of thousands, of miserable men, and yet more miserable women, and poor little children, most miserable of all, lead lives of such squalor and anguish as only they who have witnessed can conceive; that it devastates the humanity and blights the bodies and the souls not only of 600,000 drunkards, but of the millions whom their ruin drags down to shame; that it frustrates our religious efforts at home; that it destroys and ruins our mission efforts abroad; that it is the chief bane and ruin of our homes; that it is the darkest stain on the glory and the prosperity of our nation. Exaggeration, gentlemen? There is not one word of this indictment which is not true to the letter; not one word which is not capable of the most rigorous proof which evidence can establish and statistics confirm. And unless it be proper to say twilight when we mean midnight—if it is no exaggeration to say midnight when we *mean* midught, then it is none to say that the blackness of this darkness could only be represented in such colours—

As when some mighty painter dips
His pencil in the hues of earthquake and eclipse.

WHAT IS MY DUTY?

BY THE REV. J. LEWIS PEARSE.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—*Acts ix. 6.*

THIS is the question every Christian man asks at the commencement of his career. If a steadfast believer in Christianity, and a loyal follower of the Son of God, he will not fail to put the question at every stage of life, on every occasion when there are diverging paths, or one only, on which he can enter to the glory of his Divine Lord. Many Christians, in view of the terrible evils connected with strong drink, have sought counsel of Him who is Light, and in whom no darkness is ; they have said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?" and we believe an answer, clear, unmistakable, emphatic, earnest, has replied, "Touch not strong drink, taste not, handle not, for your own sakes, for My sake leave it alone." Thousands of Christians are now total abstainers, from the intelligent and growing conviction that they are acting in accordance with the will of God, whom they are bound to obey. But the abstaining Christians form but a small minority of the Christian world ; and the question is forced upon us, If abstinence is a right practice for us, and we have no doubt it is, why do not Christians join our ranks in greater numbers ? What element in the question is there which, laying certain responsibilities upon us, discharges their consciences ? What is right for us, cannot be wrong to the majority of our fellow-Christians. It is possible the evidence that has convinced us would convince them, if it could be put before them. If we have been made abstainers by sophistries instead of sound reasoning, it is time our eyes were opened ; if the stern logic of grim facts has been wrongly interpreted by us, we are prepared to reverse our decision ; if, on the other hand, our position is unassailable ; if ours is a good cause ; if we are doing good service, then, in the name of all that is true and good, we say, "Scorn us not, oppose us not, criticise not, but come over and help us." If we could but disarm your minds of the prejudice produced by whatever cause ; if you will but take the pains to collect facts, to weigh arguments in a patient, dis-

passionate, judicial, and yet benevolent spirit, we think our cause would be your cause too. We speak from experience when we say that the class called moderate drinkers usually avoid the drink question. Happily, the march of opinion, and, as we deem, wisely-formed opinion, makes the avoidance of this question now well-nigh an impossibility. But while we may not, because we cannot, avoid the question, we may give it the cold shoulder, as a host may serve a visitor who calls at an inconvenient season. Now to some of us this is a burning question, and must at least have an earnest mind brought to bear upon it. We now invite your kind and earnest attention while we lay before you some of the reasons in favour of total abstinence which have had weight with ourselves, and explain our position in the ranks of the temperance army.

*Moderate drinkers should become abstainers, on the ground of
bodily health and moral safety.*

Health is, no doubt, one of the greatest, if not the most precious, of all our temporal blessings. It is the condition, not only of happy, but also of useful existence. Among those who have life in diseased and crippled forms, are to be found some who, by God's grace, are both happy and useful; but their number is small as their usefulness is limited. Our health depends partly, though not altogether, upon ourselves. Disease may be inherited by birth, may become ours by contagion or accident: it may result, as alas! it too often does, from some form of excess produced by thoughtlessness, ignorance, folly, or vice. With the avoidable causes of disease and degeneration we have now to deal. There are laws of health, some of which are well understood and are commonly acted upon; there are others less perfectly known, and more frequently disobeyed. To our fallen nature, the neglect and disobedience of God's physical laws is often found more pleasant and easy than obedience to them, the same fatal bias extending beyond the range of the physical, to the moral laws. This applies to the use of alcoholic drinks. It has now been demonstrated by the greatest living authorities on these matters, by those who have given most time and attention to the subject, that strong drink, even in moderate quantities, is injurious to healthy life, while total abstinence promotes health and prolongs life. If this is proved, as we hold it is proved, by chemical experiments on the one hand, and the facts of experience on the other, then the course of wise, common-sense men, not to say godly men, is quite clear. Take this one fact, recorded by medical men, that the amount of alcohol taken with but one glass of sherry causes the heart to beat 4,300 times more than it would otherwise do, which represents an amount of force expended equal to the lifting of a ton weight. The abstainer conserves this force, and is, all things being equal, a

stronger man in consequence. That strong drink is not needed, is made evident by the fact, that there are some three millions of abstainers in Great Britain, who find they not only subsist, but enjoy better health, work more cheerfully, and are less susceptible of fatigue. This testimony comes from all classes of the community. They come forward to bear witness to the benefits of total abstinence from our coal and iron mines ; from amidst the dirt, dust, and darkness of the one, and the fierce fires, hissing steam, and choking smoke of the other. The doctor and minister, from their mental toil ; the soldier, from off his Indian marches ; the sailor, from the snow and ice of the North Pole ; all unite in crying, "Stop the drink stream, we are all better without it." Then, finally, the directors of a great life insurance company step forward and, with the authority of mathematical certainty, tell us that total abstainers live the longest. We know what will be said by many, "We require alcohol as a medicine; we have tried abstinence and it did not suit us, our medical man insisted on our taking it." We doubt not there are some peculiar constitutions for which alcohol may be necessary, but, in the face of the overwhelming evidence supplied by the abstaining community, we cannot but think that abstinence has not received a fair trial ; it is abandoned directly the system misses the artificial stimulant ; the former drink is resorted to, till "taking it as a medicine" ceases to be an accurate explanation ; it becomes again the common beverage. If it is evident we cannot dispense with its use without impairing health, we should take it, provided there is nothing in the doctor's pharmacopœia to serve as well ; but we ought after a time to repeat the question of our text, for it is possible that the drink which injures 99 out of a 100 is no longer a blessing to us. The chances are it is not. If its action is medicinal, it ought to be but temporary ; if after a long period physical disorder remains, it should suggest, and would in other cases suggest, the desirability of a change of medicine. If in Timothy's condition water was to be exchanged for wine, in our condition the beneficial change might be from wine to water. Some of us are inclined to think that had Paul read the Cantor Lectures he might never have penned that oft-quoted advice. For moderate drinkers to get comfort and ease to their conscience from this verse, they must first shut their eyes to the fact that Timothy was evidently a water drinker, as a rule ; they must also enter upon the difficult task of proving the wine recommended possessed intoxicating qualities, and further, they must satisfy themselves that Paul's medical advice was to be taken, not for what it was worth, like his advice concerning marriage, but forming an integral part of God's revealed will to guide and govern human action.

Whatever the exception may be, it will be granted by those who have examined the evidence within reach of all, that abstinence

tends to preserve and improve health, and so to prolong life. If health and life are a trust, I dare not by any conduct of mine impair the one or shorten the other. If something more precious than health and dearer than life were obtainable only by their being sacrificed, I should be justified—yea, I should be bound, to lay them on the altar. If only by wasting vigils and close confinement I can nurse my child, I will watch ; I will let my strength be enfeebled until it ebb away. If I can save the living freight on an endangered steamer, I will go down into the engine-room and be scalded to death. If the people of Sierra Leone can only hear the Gospel from my lips, it may be mine to say, “Here am I, send me.” I should say so because the cause of my fellows is the cause of humanity, is the cause of God ; but I dare not exhaust my strength, impair my health, and shorten my days, by the use of alcohol. If I know these to be its effects and I continue to drink, it is still a sacrifice, but it is not to God, but to Bacchus ; it does no good, but feeds a gigantic, perhaps the most gigantic, of modern evils.

But we have to urge another reason for total abstinence ; it is morally safer. While it is deadly for some, strong drink is dangerous to all. They who use it, say what they may, run the risk of becoming its slave. It creates and feeds the appetite, which is often strengthened by being fed, and which becomes in many cases too strong to be controlled by human power. When I know that men and women possessed apparently of as much self-control as we, as unlikely as we from the possession of Divine grace, have fallen through strong drink, it seems not the language of faith but rather of presumption to say, “I am safe.” Yes ; believers in Christianity are safe from all evil if they watch and pray ; but if instead of avoiding what has proved a snare to myriads of their race they seek it and indulge it, then, in our judgment, the condition God lays down is violated, and He is responsible for the consequences no longer. As all men think all men mortal but themselves, so moderate drinkers seem to think all men liable to fall into this pit but themselves, and yet we see nothing so different in one man from what we find in another to warrant such a sense of self-security. As with the supposed lion-tamer who was wont, for the amusement of the company, to put his head into the lion’s mouth, and put it in once too often, so men who in their vanity dream the drink has lost all power to harm them, find the words of the old Book only too true, that “Wine [like the lion] is a mocker : and strong drink [like the hungry beast] is raging.” The lion-tamer probably reasoned that every performance terminating safely reduced the risk of his being killed, but, as the sequel showed, he reasoned falsely ; so do they reason falsely who think from a long experience of the power of alcohol they can now drink it with impunity ; for obser-

vation has taught us to regard no man as safe from the mocker's art who places himself 'neath his cruel spell. Deliverance is to be found only in disentanglement, salvation only in separation from the drink itself. Before pronouncing ourselves free from danger, we should remember there is in some, alas ! an hereditary tendency to the love of drink, to which tendency we should be awake, if perchance it exists. The vices of men do not always reappear in their immediate heirs ; but wait a generation or two, and then the too-fatal virus is found in the blood. If drinking habits increase, the drunkard's posterity will be in greater danger of drunkenness.

The susceptibility of others to the action of alcohol, either from constitution or occupation, renders its use highly dangerous. Some persons can take scarcely any without its being evident. Its effect is sudden, and is soon produced. Some become intemperate in certain conditions of bodily health, other in times of unusual sorrow, depression, or of sudden adversity. Not long ago, one who had fallen very low said to me : "I was not so until my mother died" ; and we know how oft upon our lips are the words, "Ah ! it was at that time he took to drinking." The ordinary circumstances did not test him, the extraordinary only too severely, and he fell. The tempter found in the drink, the daily beverage, the glass of wine, the dinner beer, or the drop taken with the evening pipe, an instrument ready to hand to effect the ruin he is ever planning. If the common can ruin a man, the devil never goes out of his way for the uncommon. In these drinking habits is the viper's egg. Let the favourable circumstances come, and the comparatively innocent egg becomes a viper, fang and all complete. In the drink we have the tinder ; let the favourable circumstances come, the tinder and spark touch, and forthwith there is a blaze. The merchants of Naples may love to have their residences on the slopes of Vesuvius, for the situation is beautiful ; it may be, but the ground is volcanic on which the houses stand, and the tenants must run the risk of having them shattered by subterranean forces, or be drowned themselves in tides of burning lava. Ale and wine and spirits may be pleasant, but the pleasure is dearly bought, even at the remotest risk to body and soul. Parents, be on the safe side, and bring your children up on total abstinence principles, you yourselves setting the example ! Dread the possibility of having to lay an intemperate son in a premature grave, and it is to be dreaded as a possibility in your case, for it has been a dread fact in the history of other parents, who, looking at the drink as we all look at questions in the light of our own experience, cry, "I hate the drink," and wonder at other parents giving it to their offspring at all. Young men and women, touch not the intoxicating cup, I beseech you ! I begin to tremble for young people

who take stimulants, and would fain have you all, not only believers in Christ, but abstainers from strong drink.

Another consideration I would urge upon moderate drinkers is that *moderate drinking and drunkenness are closely connected*. I need not repeat what has been said so often, that the thousands of drunkards who have gone to their account, as well as the thousands now living to curse themselves, their families, their kind, were once moderate drinkers. As there is but a step between us and death, so there is but a step between the drunkenness of a man to-day, and the moderate drinking of the same man yesterday. Perhaps it was five glasses drained off, and he was reckoned sober ; if he had stopped there, he would have been regarded as a temperate man ; but he did not ; he was thirsty, he would have just one more. He then lost complete self-control of himself ; his merry companions called *him* merry now, and said he had had a drop too much ; but whatever merry companions might call it, the man is “drunk with wine, wherein is excess.” The line is not a fixed line, but movable, dividing sobriety from intemperance. It may ever be shifting with one man, who, as a neophyte, feels unsteady after his two glasses, and later on, as the hard drinker, can polish off his five times two with no greater apparent effect. The army of drunkards is recruited, not from the ranks of total abstainers, but from the ranks of moderate drinkers, and we shall not greatly diminish the number of drunkards until we greatly increase the number of total abstainers.

The moderate drinker, from his use of strong drink, is in an unfavourable position either for reproving or reforming the drunkard, and for the following reasons :—We will suppose a man to have become intemperate, to have acquired a passion for strong drink ; to see it is to lust greedily after it, to crave for it till the sensation is painful beyond description. It is one in whom you are interested—perchance a friend, a relative, whose reclamation you intensely desire. He is your guest, for, in spite of his self-degradation, you cling to him as he does to you ; he sits at your board ; upon the dinner-table is the jug of ale, which is handed round to all but the transgressor ; he is handed water—a hint to himself and all present that he is a drunkard, and they dare not give him anything stronger, or they might have a scene in the house. The cloth is removed, and dessert laid ; white wine and red is poured into the glasses, healths are drunk, sentiments are spoken to ; but the visitor is made a marked man, and reminded of his vice. Night comes, and another opportunity arrives for branding the weak one before all, when the grog is mixed and drunk preparatory to “Good night,” and the separation. We ask whether such treatment would be likely to restore the offender, whether it would not have probably the very opposite effect of

rousing his ire, and, if his purse were not empty, of driving him to the gin-palace to drown his maddening thoughts in brandy ? We grant it would have been a mistaken policy to have given him the drink of which the others partook, but we affirm it would have been a policy alike more noble and effectual to have placed no strong drink on the table at all ; and if he but knew it had been given up for his sake, who knows but such a mark of affectionate interest might have commenced the work of restoration ! It may seem to some very philosophic, but to me it sounds heartless, if not cruel, to say to a drunkard, "I may drink, but you must abstain, because you don't know when you have had enough." There is the apparent harshness of proud Pharisaism about this which could do nothing save repel the drunkard further from his adviser, and attach him more closely to his cup. Many a drunkard feels his weakness and mourns over it ; it is sorry comfort to tell him he is no longer fit for the company of wise and sober men, but must now join the drunkards who are obliged to leave the drink alone altogether, for, although they go the same road as other men, they don't know when to stop. Is there not something more brotherly in saying, "My friend, I believe it will help you to leave off the drink if I dispense with it too ; you will then see we can both do without it ; it is, after all, but a luxury ; my practice will have more weight when it illustrates my precept, whilst the removal of the drink from the house will remove from your path a snare" ? Moderate drinkers sometimes assure us that their moderation preaches a better sermon than our total abstinence : there is more virtue, it is said, in their conduct ; they display the self-control for lack of which, the drunkard has become what he is. We for our part claim no particular virtue because we abstain. We are bound also to say we fail to see any particular virtue in the moderate drinker, who usually likes the alcoholic beverage, and therefore takes it. The drunkard may be a foolish man, but he is a bigger fool than you take him for if you think he sees any virtue in moderate drinking sufficient to influence his mind not to drink at all. We believe we can say without fear of contradiction that for every drunkard reclaimed by the example of moderate drinking, we can produce a thousand reclaimed from their evil courses by the consistent advice and persistent labours of total abstainers.

Moderate drinking supports the drink traffic, which makes the drunkenness possible.

It is granted by all who wish well to their country that the public-house, the gin-palace, the beershop, as national institutions, are a national curse. Many would demur to the opinion that it is so from the nature of the trade, and would hold that public-houses may become a blessing to society instead of a curse. We demur

to this opinion very decidedly, and think the public-house is baneful because the drink is itself a bane, and can never be otherwise while its nature remains what it is. We hold it to be unjust to throw all the blame upon the drink-seller : the drink manufacturer and the drink consumer has each his share ; what proportion it is not mine to say. It is certainly unfair to attack the publican in his white apron, whilst the brewer and distiller go scot free, and the purchaser is regarded as having clean hands. That there would be no sellers if there were no buyers is a self-evident proposition, but, like many of its kind, would make many moderate drinkers abstainers if they apprehended all its meaning. If I buy, somebody must sell. It is not possible to find a publican who only serves sober, moderate-drinking people ; if such a man were to be found, and you dealt there, the difficulties would be greatly reduced ; but he can't be found ; his house is a public-house, and he is bound to wait upon all comers, unless a man is too drunk to be served ; he may not sell it to him, but he may serve another whose purchased glass was the one needed to destroy his equilibrium, and he leaves the bar drunk, and well is it for the sanity of that tavern-keeper he cannot go home with every drunkard he has helped to intoxicate. Could he do so, I think so well of my brother-men, that I believe nine-tenths of the trade would get out of their business as speedily as possible. Could he track the footsteps of the debauchee whose passions he has inflamed ; the mother who goes home and in her drunken sleep smothers her babe, or the father who, like a madman in his fury, goes to what was once a home, to make his wife and little children tremble and fear ; could he see the suffering of which he has sown the seed, the graves he has begun to dig, the destiny towards which he has sent with surer aim and swifter course another soul ; then the money taken from his till would burn like molten metal ; he would go to his chamber, not to sleep, but, pacing the room hour after hour, would wonder whether one tithe of the mischief he had wrought could possibly be undone ; whether the thousands of pounds he had amassed would be accepted by the victims of his horrid trade as compensation ; whether a holy God could have mercy upon one who had indirectly, if not directly, poured the wine of bitterness into the cups of such a great multitude.

If the drink-sellers' calling is a dishonourable one ; if it be one in which we could not engage without a loss of self-respect, or without a blunted moral sense ; if its associations are evidently demoralising and immoral ; if some of its fruits are certain and widespread ruin ; can it be right to encourage another to do that which, if done by myself, would expose me to the malediction of the drink victims and the displeasure of that God who claims as His own the souls I have helped to blight and destroy ? The

drink-shops could not be maintained by drunkards ; it is not from drunkards publicans realise their fortunes. It is the drinking customs of the majority of our people that fill the coffers of the drink manufacturers and sellers. The trade is incapable of sufficient improvement to make it an honourable one. Men will sell all the beer they can, as the baker will his bread ; and while any drink, many will get drunk. The man who opens a shop does so intending to take all the money he can, and it is expecting too much from fallen human nature that a man whose trade is drink-selling should be careful to whom he sold and how much ; and even if he were very scrupulous about not serving a man whose sobriety he questioned, the customer has but to find his home and his little girl, perhaps just home from Sunday-school, and a jug, and the well-intentioned landlord supplies the man with the potion he ten minutes ago refused him. Some may say in reply and self-justification, it is not the fault of the publican, nor is the drink an evil thing in itself— it is the man who makes a wrong use of it who is to blame. You say, perhaps, “ You support the chemist, and yet he sells the poison with which a man takes away his life ; or the cutler, and the suicide goes to his shop for the razor with which he cuts his own throat.” Yes, I do support these tradesmen ; for the chemist’s shop is open for the sale of drugs which cure disease and relieve pain ; the poison is but one of many articles he sells, and when it is purchased it is by Act of Parliament labelled *poison*. The purchaser is cautioned as to its use, he is required to produce a certificate of character. If sane men think the cases parallel, then I own I am wrong in entering a chemist’s shop at all. The cutler sells knives, but their use has become indispensable to civilised life. This cannot be said of alcohol ; and while it slays its 100,000 a-year, 1,000 years will probably elapse before as many suicides will have made so unhappy a use of edge-tools. With the drink, which is so foul a destroyer, the publican makes a grand and tempting display ; the evil-working spirit is now lauded as nutty sherry, and now as fruity port, and now as nourishing stout or sparkling ale. The bars are so constructed as to admit of drinking with comparative secrecy, while the most prominent situations are occupied by the gin-palaces to allure the public. The publican contrives to get some benefit society to meet in the club-room, which encourages social drinking and attracts new customers. Another night the frequenters of the house have music provided for them at the landlord’s expense, and comic, if not obscene, songs and uproarious merriment are heard by the passers-by. In another apartment is the billiard-table, where, heated by grog and excited by gain, or grown desperate by loss, the gamblers linger till the midnight chimes are heard, and the lights are ordered to be turned out.

In addition to all we have said, the drink interest in the country is becoming serious from its magnitude. The drink-bill of the country has risen to £140,000,000 a-year. If we have not felt the effects of this wanton extravagance, the harvest of retribution must come. The ramifications of the evils resulting from the use of alcohol are many, the sins it leads to are legion. Could we but reduce the drink traffic we should reduce the total sum of wrong-doing ; the sins that cry to heaven for vengeance would be fewer. We must never forget that drunkenness is itself a sin —a sin that shuts out from the Kingdom of God those who practise it. Drunkenness is the parent, the foster-mother, of a hellish brood of evils, of which cruel lust, vile selfishness, coarse brutality, red-handed murder, are a few of the leading types. Sin in any shape involves guilt and misery to the wrong-doer, sinful habit is engendered, evil influences exerted ; it means a victory recorded for the devil, dishonour done to the Christ of God, grief caused to the Holy Spirit of Grace. This drink is a stumbling-block to human progress, it keeps the people down, it animalises men's minds, it deadens and blunts the better part in man. It threatens our country's weal, for (on the testimony of Sir H. Thompson) as the brain-workers increase, as they will do, with advancing civilisation, the danger of using alcoholic drinks will also increase. And with the growing commercial prosperity of a country there always comes with it the temptations to indulgence ; and the simple habits which keep a nation pure give place to the luxuriant practices which presage a nation's decay. Surely the practice of total abstinence will be a good corrective, while this great colonising nation will fulfil this part of her destiny none the less nobly that her sons go forth to the ends of the earth, themselves fortified against a strong temptation, and the founders of new kingdoms of sober men. Surely the prospect of a sober nation is worth striving for, although this is not all we aim at. We ask whether this can be better realised by moderate drinking, which involves the drink traffic with all its abominations, or by total abstinence, which renders beershops and gin-palaces unnecessary ? We mourn to-day over the drunkenness which prevails to such an extent in our beloved land, but think how much greater the evil would have been, but for the total abstinence movement, for the agitation, the literature, the public advocacy of this question for the last fifty years. If it has done good, any good which is visible and appreciable ; if the movement is doing good still—and who can doubt it ?—if God is with us, as we know by abundant proof He is, stand not aloof from us, but join our ranks, and the evil we may remove may be more manifest, and the good we accomplish more abundant and glorious.

I will in a few words answer one or two anticipated objections, and then leave this great subject for your earnest and prayerful

consideration. One of you will say, "Time and legislation will remedy the evil if only you wait patiently." As the Bishop of Peterborough said recently, "A few years ago drunkenness was common amongst the upper classes, so that the proverb 'As drunk as a lord' was no uncharitable slur, but the statement of a painful truth. It is otherwise now," said his lordship, "and what has been effected in the upper classes will take place amongst all classes." We believe Christianity has done wonders in the last half-century, but we fear that, while for shame our noble lords would not be seen as their grandfathers were, there is much excess remaining. This much is evident, that England was never so prosperous as a few years ago, and never did England consume so much strong drink. If you propose by legislation to reduce the number of drinking places, we say if to go so far is good, to go farther must be better. The half-measures of the moderate drinker might succeed, the whole measures of the temperance party *cannot* fail—prevention is better than cure. To dry up a poisoned fountain is a wiser and more humane policy than to narrow the streams and reduce their number. You must wait to get Parliament to pass any great measure of public-house reform, especially while so many brewers and their *confrères* are in the House of Commons ; but by practising total abstinence ourselves, and persuading others to do so, we are achieving something practical now ; we are, in a word, beginning to dry up the fountain.

Another objector says, "I do not see that I am bound to give up my liberty because my neighbour abuses his. On the same principle I should have to deprive myself of many other sources of gratification." Our reply is that, in giving up the use of strong drink, we only sacrifice one of the pleasures of appetite which rank low in the scale of pleasure, to men God has made in His image ; but what if in the sacrificing a lower pleasure you gain a positive good, as you certainly do, if our first argument in this discourse be sound ? It is not, it *cannot* be, any sacrifice of personal freedom if you voluntarily abstain, and no one can compel you to do this, unless by wrong-doing you become a prisoner in our gaols—which evil may God in His mercy forbid ! We have, however, to sacrifice our freedom continually ; it is necessary in all corporate life, amongst all civilised nations. If there is government there must be some sacrifice of freedom, as when we are summoned to serve on juries, whether we wish to or not. To sacrifice freedom, is often the noblest part to play—is sometimes the price that must be paid to escape real bondage. If England were invaded to-morrow, the invader would succeed, if every patriotic Briton fought the foe in the way he deemed best, regardless altogether of military law, order, and discipline. To submit to drill, to serve in the ranks, would in such a crisis be a patriotic duty and joyous privilege. And so we who abstain count it a

duty and privilege too, to give up any pleasure there may be, or seem to be, in drinking alcoholic beverages, that we may drive back a foe that menaces to-day our country and our country's weal. But I want, if I can, to strip you of every rag of self-justification for using, as a beverage, strong drink. In case, therefore, an objector should say, "Total abstinence is not commanded in the Bible, or practised by Bible heroes," we reply, neither are Sunday-schools, humane societies, or lifeboat institutions, commanded in the Bible, but they are by the spirit the Bible inculcates ; they, and total abstinence societies, are in harmony with New Testament teaching. The Apostle Paul said, "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." And as to the Bible heroes, it were better for some of them had they been abstainers. The Bible is not a record of what they might have been, but what they were ; and if these men are to be our models, then polygamy is to be practised, and domestic slavery ought to be revived. To state the argument is to refute it. Suffice it to say, the strongest man of whom the Bible makes mention was an abstainer ; the wisest man recommended others to be so ; one of the noblest patriots and illustrious prophets of the old dispensation, and the herald of the Messiah and of the new dispensation, were water drinkers, and to-day there are in the ranks of the temperance army not a few, both among the older veterans and younger recruits, who not only adorn the great cause with which they are identified, but with whom it is an honour to be in any way associated. But we ask you to join this great movement, not because of the lustre given to it by great names ; we beg of you not to be deterred from joining it because it has had, and may still have, unwise and unworthy advocates ; we ask you to judge of our principles by their inherent merit, and by their beneficent action. It is not a question to be put aside as unworthy of consideration ; there are bound up with it grave and great human interests, problems, and destinies. It may have its personal, but it has also its social, aspects ; it has a national, it has also a world-wide, bearing. It has to do with man's physical well-being ; but it also touches him on his Godward side. It concerns man, it therefore concerns God ; it has to do with time, but its issues stretch into Eternity. I entreat you, then, as you would alleviate human woe, and increase the sum of human happiness ; as you would be a rich benefactor to your beloved country ; as you would win the gratitude of the drink-cursed ; as you would have the drunkard's children call you blessed while you live, and drop tears of thankfulness on your bier when you die ; if you want to see Christ's kingdom extended ; if you would have a richly-jewelled crown in glory : then to all your other works of faith and labours of love

add yet this one—save the poor drunkard, and save from becoming drunkards all who come in your way. My task, my hearers, is ended, yours is yet to be fulfilled ; it is this : Enter into your closets, shut your doors, ask God to give you audience, and in His ear offer, each of you, this one prayer, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?” Linger at the altar until your duty is known, and your future action plain. Be honest with your consciences and your God ; and whatever He commands, that do in His strength and for His sake, and know, the peace that attends cheerful obedience, the sacred joy ever produced when we do and dare ought for Him, who for us, and for our salvation, poured out His soul unto death.

THE VOW OF THE NAZARITE.

" And I raised up your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord ? But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not." — *Amos ii. 11, 12.*

AMOS was called from very lowly toils to preach God's word to the kingdom of Israel, at a time when, in spite of one last gleam of delusive splendour under Jeroboam II., it was fast sinking into that condition of degradation and decrepitude which ended—as do the crimes of all impenitent nations—in its total and irremediable extinction. Poor he was, and ignorant, as were the apostles after him, and as a curb for false scorn and fastidious intellectualism, it is well for us to remember that such have many of God's grandest champions been. But though Amos was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but a rough herdsman and unlettered gatherer of sycamore leaves, his was one of those masculine, indignant natures, which burst like imprisoned flame through the white ashes of social hypocrisy. Prepared, like the Maccabees of old, to die in his simplicity, he was not afraid to roll God's message of thunder over apostate nations, and hurl the flash of His threatenings against guilty kings. Like Samuel before Saul, like Elijah before Ahab, like John the Baptist before Herod, like Paul before Felix, like John Huss before Sigismund, like Luther before Charles V., like John Knox before Mary Stuart, like the saints of God in all ages whose characteristic has ever been the battle-brunt, which—

" Through a cloud

Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude
To peace and truth its glorious way hath ploughed ;
And on the neck of crowned fortune proud,
Hath reared God's trophies, and His work pursued'

—so Amos testified undaunted before the idolatry of courts and priests. Now, one crime of that bad period—the crime of all bad periods, and the type of a hundred other crimes to which, alike in its origin and its developments, it is allied—was luxury and intemperance. And in this verse the prophet confronts Israel with the high appeal of God, whether He had not put the fire of the Spirit into the heart of some of their sons, and they had quenched that fire by their blandishments and conventionalities:

and whether He had not inspired some of their youths to take the vow of abstinence, and they, with the deliberate cynicism of worldlings, had tempted them to scorn and break that vow? Translated into strictly modern language, the verse would run:—“To protest against the effeminacies of self-indulgence I give you preachers; to rouse you from the surfeit of intemperance I enrolled your sons as abstainers: My preachers you silenced by your godless sophisms; my young abstainers you seduced by your ensnaring wiles.”

That this is a strict paraphrase you can judge for yourselves by reading in the sixth chapter of Numbers, the vow of the Nazarite. You will see there that the very essence of it was self-dedication. The young Nazarite consecrated himself to God; he offered himself, his soul and body, a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice. His long hair, on which razor never passed, was a symbol of his royal service. In sign of spotless purity, he was never to touch a dead body, were it even his father’s corpse. As a mark of the tranquil sovereignty of his will over the lower appetites and passions of his nature, he was to separate himself so absolutely from all wine or strong drink—nay, from all semblance of fermented liquor (which, though men are specially fond of calling it a good creature of God, is a product not of life but of death, not of nature but of corruption, not of composition but of decomposition)—that he was to taste nothing made from the vine tree, from the kernel even to the husk; and from this passage of Amos, as well as from the taunt of the Pharisees against John the Baptist that “he had a devil,” we see that the Nazarite was a marked man; and that because his vow was regarded as a tacit condemnation of the popular self-indulgence, he was exposed to the sneers of the worldly, and the temptations of the base. Nevertheless, wisdom was justified of her children. Let him who will, spread and shift the silken sail of cowardice to woo every veering breeze of applause and popularity; but may every young man amongst you who hears me, every youth who wishes to be worth his salt, make up his mind that insolent detraction is very often in this world the noblest testimonial to worth, and that the coarse dispraise of corrupted worldlings and professional slanderers is the very loftiest of eulogies. The best men, and the bravest men, and the least conventional men in this world have been ever the most loudly and the most scornfully abused; and while the world gives to its pestilential and trailing brambles the sovereignty over its forest trees, gladly and proudly may brave souls leave the bespatterment of profane approval to the shrinking caution that loves to trudge on the sunny side along the beaten track of selfishness, over the dull, dead levels of conventionality and comfort. Little recked the true Nazarite of muttered sarcasm and bitter hate—little as recked the sea of the foolish wild birds that scream above it. Health, strength, physical beauty, wholesomeness of life, tranquillity of

soul, serene dominion over evil passions, followed in the path of early and life-long abstinence. Not theirs to wail, "*Vino forma perit, vino consumitur aetas,*" as wailed the young Roman poet, who, like better men than he, have degraded themselves into premature decrepitude ; but, as Jeremiah sang about the days of Zion in her glory, "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphires." Not theirs the tottering gait of the drunkard, or the shaking hand of the debauchee ; not theirs the brazen impudence of the shameless, or the hang-dog misery of the remorseful ; but theirs the strength which is the child of temperance, and the beauty which is the sacrament of goodness. Such was Joseph, twice in the Hebrew called a Nazarite, who, to strengthen for ever the high purpose of the young and tempted, uttered the glowing protest of youthful innocence, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God ?" Such was Samuel, for a nation's deliverance consecrated from childhood to hallowed service. Such was Elijah, the lord of hair, the wild Bedawy prophet, who made Jezebel quail before him for all her painted face and bloody hands. Such was John the Baptist, emerging from the wilderness where his soul had caught a touch of flame, to make the Pharisee blush under his broad phylactery, and shake the pulses of the tyrant on his throne. Such was James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, with his robe of fine white linen, and knees hard with kneeling, and prayers which seemed to the people to open and shut the doors of heaven. Such in varying degrees were Antony, Boniface, Bernard, Francis of Assissi, Milton, Wesley, Lacordaire. There seems to be a special strength, a special blessing, above all a special power of swaying the souls of others for their good, which is imparted to wise and voluntary abstinence. The hands of invisible consecration overshadow, the fire of a spiritual unction crowns, the head of him who in early youth has learnt to say with his whole heart, "In strong warfare, in holy self-denial, I dedicate my youth to God." And such we want : we want them among you the youth of England ; and in proportion as we get them will England sink or rise. We want very specially just now this almost scornful rejection of self-indulgence, this deliberate determination to plain living and high thinking in the young. We do not want those whom they call the gilded youth—the fluttering butterflies of the season—the dandies and the gossips, and the pleasure-seekers, who make their lives deservedly wretched because they make them deliberately base, and to whom we might say, in the words of the poet,

"Ah, what avails to understand
The merits of a spotless shirt,
A dapper boot, a little hand,
If half the little soul be dirt?"

Nor do we want the beardless atheists, who, with the crude smatterings of a secondhand scepticism, can not only demolish with one flash of their splendid intellects, and set aside with one wave of their contemptuous hand, the truths which till yesterday a Faraday and a Whewell preached, but who, wiser than the aged in their own conceit, even revel in the airs of disdain with which they can insult as dupes or hypocrites the saints of God, the very latchet of whose shoes they are not worthy to stoop down and unloose. Nor, again, do we want the youths of coarse fibre and vacant heart, who, in the first treasons of a spurious liberty, court the temptations which they should shun like the pestilence; and knowing well God's doom on drunkenness and lust, yet go as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks. Nor do we want any, be they men or be they women, who do but take their license in the fields of time, heedless of the degradation that follows them, heedless that they are but adding blackness to earth's darkness by their wasted lives. This age wants, England wants, the Church of Christ wants, God wants, those who, self-dedicated, like the ideal Nazarite, to noble ends, have not lost the natural grace and bloom of youthful modesty. We do want natures strong, and sweet, and simple, to whom life is no poor collection of fragments, its first volume an obscene and noisy jest-book, its last a grim tragedy or a despicable farce; but those to whom, however small the stage, their life is a regal drama, played out before the eyes of God and men. We do want souls, fresh and virginal, dowered with the hate of hate and scorn of scorn against oppression and selfishness, and the love of love for all that is pure, and generous, and true; souls that shall say, seeing that life is short and the fame of virtue immortal, I choose—God helping me—I choose the narrow, uphillward path, up which before me my Saviour bore the Cross, and, not wishing to change for one of earth's cankered roses its hallowed thorns,—let false friends discountenance, let the worldly persecute, let fools deride,—but, *mutare aut timere sperno*, I scorn either to change or fear.

Well, then, in one word we want the spirit of willing Nazarites; and since total abstinence was the central conception of the vow of the Nazarite, while I am not at all astonished that selfish Saducees or corrupted Hellenisers should hate and scoff at it, it is to me amazing and portentous that even some good and true men should represent such self-denial as Manichæan, as unscriptural, as a mark of inferiority—as I know not what. I have no time, and in this pulpit it should be surely needless, to shatter each of these sophisms to atoms, and dash it indignantly aside as one more instance in which—as in order to defend polygamy, and the Inquisition, and pauperism, and the slave-trade, and the suppression of science, and the obstacles to discovery, and the deification of ignorance, and the right divine of kings to govern

wrong—the Devil, substituting the fetish worship of the dead letter for the fire of the living spirit, has—as though man should use a medicine as a poison, and the light of the Pharos for a wreckers' reef—quoted Scripture for his purpose, and made it the cloak of superstition and the shield of wrong. Yet let me say at once that I am not going to be guilty of the dictatorial Pharisaeism which says to any one, “ You are committing a sin if you do not take to total abstinence.” That I do not say ; and even in this age of bronze lacquer, and impudent personalities, in which nothing is more common than wilful calumny, let no one attribute to me that language :—but what I do say to every one of you, and if the subject be entirely new to this pulpit, I say it all the more—and most of all do I say it if it shall shock in any that epicurean self-satisfaction which is utterly fatal to all noble life—I do say to every one of you, and I say it fearlessly, and downrightly, in God's name, that you *are* bound in the best way you can—bound in the sight of God, bound as a Christian, bound as a patriot, bound as an ordinarily good man—to go up every one of you before the tribunal of your own consciences, and, whether you be familiar with them or unfamiliar, to lay very solemnly to heart the stern facts which I shall try to brand upon your memories to-day. The Universities, thank God, have awakened from the dead, sensual sleep of the eighteenth century. The old type of college Fellows vegetating for life in vapid and useless luxury is utterly extinct. Even from among undergraduates—though there be perhaps among them less of the modesty and respect for elders, and gratitude for kindness, which were virtues which still existed in the days of their fathers, there has yet, I hope, utterly vanished the old coarse type of ignorant and dissolute idlers. It was but the other day (a thing which even ten years ago would have been utterly impossible) that at Oxford the Sheldonian Theatre was used, and the Vice-Chancellor presided at a thing once deemed so vulgar and plebeian as a temperance meeting, at which some of the leading professors spoke ; and Cambridge is taking her part, and taking it right nobly, in the great battle between Ebal and Gerizim, light and darkness, heaven and hell ; and hundreds, I hope and believe, of her manly youths are daily learning more and more, in the light of shining examples, to scorn delights and love labours, in the high endeavour “ to make earth like heaven and every man like God.” And if there be but one here who cares only to sleep and feed, and steep himself in the gross mud-honey of a sensual life, if there be but one who does not care to do God's work, or to help His children, or to make better this sin-devastated world, to him I speak not ; but to all you, the rest, I say that, acknowledging as you do the law of charity, it is not charity merely to toss to human suffering the crumbs of your superfluity, but to probe its causes, to anticipate, to avert them.

It is a characteristic—a very fine and redeeming characteristic—of this age, that all who dare to call themselves Christians, are thoroughly in earnest (thoroughly, and more wisely, and more systematically, and less despairingly in earnest than of old) in the work of social amelioration ; but yet,—mainly because there is here, there is at our doors, there is in the very midst of us, an evil, colossal and horrible—an evil with which, to its utter shame, the State has not yet dared to grapple—the evil, I mean, of universal drinking and universal drunkenness—not only has much of all this vast charitable effort been wholly insignificant for good, but some of it has been absolutely powerful for harm, increasing the evils which it wished to alleviate, and perpetuating the miseries which it desired to relieve. And in the hearing of some of you, in whose hands shall be the future of England, who will live to fill her pulpits, to write her literature, to make her laws, and who will, I hope, be eager to help in tearing away this poisoned robe which has been maddening the blood of our country ; I say, with all the emphasis of a conviction not hastily or rashly formed, that not only are our best agencies of mercy neutralised by this one vice of intemperance, but that all these agencies concentrated into their most effective vigour would do less—infinitely less—good than would be done by the expulsion of this one *preventable* cause of sin and misery. Called by the Providence of God from the brightness of a life spent at our great public schools, to face the repellent squalor of London pauperism, *that* has been brought home to me by vivid personal experience. “I speak that which I know, and testify that which I have seen.” But I do not ask you—you in your learned culture and cloistered calm—I who am but a London clergyman, with no leisure whatever to be a student—I do not ask you for one moment to accept on my poor authority a dictum for which, if time permitted, I could simply overwhelm you with irresistible evidence ; evidence which, in spite of disdain and in spite of struggle, should arrest your attention, and fetter and rivet to the rock of conviction even him among you to whom this topic is most distasteful. “Every day’s experience tends more and more to confirm me in the opinion that the temperance cause lies at the foundation of all social and political reform.” These are not mine, but the weighty words of the calm, wise statesman, Richard Cobden. “Every benevolent institution utters the same complaint. A monster obstacle is in our way—strong drink ; by whatever name the demon is styled, in whatever way it presents itself, this, this prevents our success. Remove this one obstacle, and our course will be onwards, and our labours will be blessed.” These words are not mine, they are the massive eloquence of Mr. John Bright. “We are convinced that if a statesman, who desired to do the utmost for his country, were thoughtfully to inquire which of the topics of the day deserved the most intense force of his attention,

the true reply—the reply which would be exacted by due deliberation—would be that he should study the means by which this worst of plagues should be stayed." Those are the words of the late thoughtful and lamented Charles Buxton. "Profligacy, vice, and immorality are not thundering at our gates like a besieging army, but they are undermining the very ground on which we stand." Those words so deep in their pathos are yet the utterance of the genial and beloved Lord Palmerston. "Let us crush these artists in human slaughter, who have reconciled their country to sickness and ruin, and spread over the pitfalls of debauchery such a bait as cannot be resisted." In such stern words spoke, more than a hundred years ago, the worldly and polished Chesterfield. Are not such statements from such men—undeniable, uncontradicted, nay, even unchallenged as they are—at least enough to waken the deep slumber of a decided opinion even if they be not enough to break down the clenched antagonism of an invincible prejudice, or to dispel the stupid selfishness of an incurable frivolity? They are not the words of men at whom you can sneer as crochety politicians or temperance fanatics, or whom the very best of you all, in his own estimation, can set aside with a disparagement or demolish with a gibe. The very cleverest of youthful graduates,—or even of undergraduates,—cannot quite stab these men with an epigram, or refute them, as fops refuted Berkeley, with a grin. To sneer at these would be to condemn yourselves as incapable; these not to know would argue yourselves unknown. And yet these are but a few of many such warnings uttered by some of the best, greatest, wisest in the land, and you ought not, you must not, you surely dare not, ignore them.

But if these be not enough I will add something more. Taking alcohol as a convenient generic name for the specific element in all kinds of intoxicating drink, I will ask you to look with me for a moment at what it is not and what it is, and at what it costs. It used to be believed that alcohol was a food; it is now conclusively demonstrated (and when I say "conclusively demonstrated," I ask you to believe that I mean in the most literal sense conclusively demonstrated) that it contains not one single element—whether nitro-genous or hydro-carbonic—of food; and that, as one of the first modern chemists has said, there is in nine quarts of alcohol less food than can be spread on the end of a table-knife. Nor is it a source of strength, for alike, in Africa and India, in the Arctic and in the Antarctic, and by great labour employers in the temperate zones, and by distinct experiments with navvies in gangs, and soldiers on the march, it is matter of proof that those can labour best, both physically and mentally, in whom the cold is not intensified by the weakening reaction from artificial stimulant, and in whom the sun's fierceness has "no alcoholic ally within the brain." Nor is it a source of health; for the lives of total abstainers are now known to be more valuable

in an insurance than other lives ; and not a few very eminent living physicians have testified that "the daily use of it, even in quantities conventionally deemed moderate, not only causes some of the most fearful and dangerous maladies, but even injures the body, and diminishes the mental powers to an extent of which few people are aware." Least of all, then, is it a necessity, seeing that it has been happily unknown to whole races, and prohibited by immense religions, and in England alone three millions of total abstainers, of whom very few have ever repented, can testify, that since they abandoned it, they, like the Nazarite of old, have been clearer of brain, and more strong of limb, more vigorous in health, and more calm in happiness. I might go on to any extent with such evidence ; and on the faith of it, and on the yet stronger faith of daily experience, I again assert, not as a dubious theory, but as an established fact, that to men in ordinary health, alcohol is not a food, nor a necessity, nor a source of health, nor a source of warmth, nor of physical strength, least of all of mental power ; but, that when it is not a potent medicine, it is a mere luxury—a luxury which is at the best harmless, but which is frequently dangerous, sometimes fatal, always quite superfluous, never particularly noble.

Let us understand then well, my brethren, alcohol is a luxury, and nothing but a luxury, and if being healthy we indulge in it at all, it is not because we need it, but because we like it. Well, and this being so, what does the luxury cost ? At what expense does the nation, as a nation, gratify its liking ? I will tell you. It costs us in tillage the waste of millions of acres of soil ; in food, the destruction of millions of tons of grain ; in hard cash, the deleterious absorption of millions of pounds of money. It is beyond all question the one main, if not the sole, cause of the squalid, degrading, and dangerous pauperism, against which some of you will have to struggle hereafter in the streets of London and other great cities ; and in the middle classes, who have often to strive so hard, you would be surprised if I could show you how much they might yearly save by this abstinence alone. And though that is something, though it is a consideration not to be despised by youths who will soon have to make their way with daily increasing difficulty, amid the hard competitions of an over-crowded population—and though it will help them very materially in the stern battle of life to have acquired simple and self-denying habits, yet all this saving to individuals, all this saving to the nation of yearly increasing of millions of pounds, which would make it not only more wealthy, but also more prosperous by incalculable advantages, is the least important point. "*Tanto opere, tanto labore et impendio constat, quod hominis mentem mutet ac furorem gignat millibus hunc sceleri deditis,*" said the Elder Pliny nearly 2,000 years ago, and it is now more true a thousand times. In any other connection you would think this vast

expenditure, this colossal waste, a consideration of overwhelming importance, yet in this it is the smallest element in the question. Of far deeper, of far more awful significance, is what it costs in disease, what it costs in crime, what it costs in misery, what it costs to the glory of England now, and the hopes of English generations for years to come. I should have no time, I have no heart, to tell you all that could be told under this head. I entreat you not to turn impatiently from it, nay—I tell you plainly you have no right to turn impatiently from it. For the drinking of some means inevitably, as things are, the drunkenness of many ; and these who sin, these who suffer, these who die, are our own flesh and blood. I believe that there is scarcely one family in England which has not suffered from this hideous plague, scarce a house in England where there is not one dead. And oh ! “is it nothing to you all, ye that pass by ?” You have heard what drink costs to the nation in money, what does it cause in disease and accident ? Ask the dreary page of statistics, and you will read {that in so-called accidents, but accidents perfectly preventable, it costs us broken limbs, and shipwrecked vessels, and burnt houses, and shattered railway trains, and the deaths of children, overlaid by drunken mothers, or beaten savagely by drunken fathers ; and to tell you what it costs in disease, I should have to take you, not in fancy, but in hard fact, to what the poet saw as the result of intemperance in meats and drinks.

“A lazardhouse it seemed, wherein were laid
 Numbers of all diseased : all maladies
 Of ghastly spasm, and racking torture : qualm
 Of heart-sick agony—all feverous kinds—
 Dropsies, and asthmas, and heart-racking rheums.
 Dire was the tossing, deep the groans : despair
 Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch ;
 And over them triumphant Death his dart
 Shook—but delayed to strike.”

This is what those who claim a right to speak with authority tells us it costs in sheer disease ; and which of you is so ignorant of English history, of English literature, of English life, as not to know, further, of noblest reputations stained, of glorious intellects ruined, of great souls embittered, of invaluable lives cut short ? And what does it cost in crime ? I will tell you, not as a surmise of my own, but on the recorded testimony, on the emphatic evidence of almost every judge and magistrate and recorder on the English bench. Remember that those arrested for drunkenness do not furnish one-tithe of the drunkards, and then shudder to hear that in one year alone 203,989 were arrested for crimes in which drunkenness was entered as a part of the charge, and that last year 5,131 women—only think of that, and

of all the hideous degradation, all the unspeakable horror, which it implies—were arrested for drunkenness in Middlesex alone. In every province, in every county, in every great city of the United Kingdom, it has been stated from the seat of justice again and again that but for drunkenness there would not be in England one-tenth of the existing crime. It is getting a hideous common-place of judges. Only a few days ago Lord Coleridge said at Durham that but for drink we might shut up nine-tenths of our gaols. Last week was brought up before Mr. Justice Manisty, at Manchester, a wretched creature in man's semblance, who, as though he were worse than a natural brute beast made to be taken and destroyed, had brutally kicked to death a wife far advanced in pregnancy, and the judge, in sentencing him to the gallows, said, "You have been found guilty of the crime of wilful murder, your victim being your own wife. You are a sad, sad instance of the consequences of indulging in drink, which has brought you to this fearful condition. It is only owing to God's mercy that this has not brought many more into a similar case. I am afraid if this vice continues to be indulged in as it now is, that many more will stand in a like position to you. Oh, that we could by administering the law put an end to it." Ah, he might well say that; but dare you blink such testimony? Do you think that they say these things rashly? And if you will not listen to the reiterated warnings of the judges in their ermine, will you listen to the noble-hearted missionaries, who tell us what drink costs to the glory of England in the execration of her name over whole continents, and the ruin of her efforts among whole populations? Could I summon the Maories of New Zealand—once so healthy that you might smite a man with a broad axe, and in a few days he would be well, now, in the language of a high Government official, "almost as bad as the English, polluted and contaminated by their drink,"—what would they say? If I could summon the Indians of North America, once not unhappy, now degraded, maddened, exterminated by our accursed fire-water, what would they say? They *have* said that because of it they spit at the name of Christian. If we ask the Mahometans what do they say? Is there a Christian in England with conscience so dead, with heart so rough, with cheek so brazen, as not to blush when he hears that if they see one of their number drunk they have been heard to say, "He has left Mahomet, and gone to Jesus." If we ask the Hindoos what do they say? They have said by the lips of their eloquent representative, Keshub Chunder Sen, that all the splendid benefits of our English rule in India have been nullified and counterbalanced by our teaching them the use of beer and brandy; that the wailing of widows rends the air of India with curses against the British Government for having introduced this thing. And,

again, from the Southern Sea the voice of yet another missionary says to us :—" If you love missions, help, help to dethrone this denion of intemperance—our reproof before the heathen, the blight of our infant churches." And oh, sirs, when you hear such things, are we not—we, the sons of proud, glorious, free England —are we not to our burning infamy what one has called us, the drunken Helots of the world.

So much, then, for money and disease, and crime and civilisation ; and what does drink cost in human misery ? Have you hearts ? If you have, I might say—

" Sit you down,
And I will wring your heart, for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff,
If damned custom hath not brazed it so
That it is proof and bulwark against sense."

But, ah ! I have no tongue to utter, no imagination to conceive, no calculus to measure, the immensity of this national curse, this national calamity. It would require the vision of the Angels of Record, if they can gaze on it with eyes unblinded by such tears as angels weep, to tell of those miseries of millions for centuries —" to pass, as it were, from chamber to chamber of the prophet's vision of abomination, and to mark the crime in every form, the vice in every shape, the disease in every aspect that can make disease horrible," that has been caused by the corrupted fruit of this tree of the knowledge of evil. He alone whose ears are open to the lion's roar and the raven's cry can catch the numberless accents of that wail of incurable anguish and uncontrollable despair which has streamed upwards for generations, till the vault of heaven has become "one vast whispering gallery," to prolong and reverberate the groans of those who have slain their own peace by this voluntary imprisonment. He alone by whom the hairs of our head are all numbered can count the widows who are widows because of drink ; the madmen who are mad because of it ; the grey heads that it has made grey ; the sad hearts that it has crushed with sadness ; the ruined families that it has ruined ; the brilliant minds which it has quenched ; the unfolding promise that it has cankered ; the bright and happy boys and girls whom it has blasted into shame and misery ; the young and the gifted whom it has hurried headlong into dishonoured and nameless graves. Is it not Shakespeare himself who says, by the mouth of the disgraced and ruined Cassio, " O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee Devil " ? What does drink cost in human misery ? Ah, how can I tell you ? Can I count the leaves of the forest, or the sands upon the shore ? And the sounds of this misery are like the sighing of the leaves of illimitable forests, and the plashing on the shores of unfathomable seas. He alone whose ear is open to the cry of

the poor and destitute can hear the wailing of that multitude of miserable, miserable women, who, taking in despair to the drink which their husbands have taught them, get degradingly content with the starving squalor which they call their homes ; can hear the poor wretch who has vainly followed her drunken tyrant to the public-house moan, in agonies of entreaty, "Come home ! come home !" or see her watching and waiting in that foul mockery of a home till the sot reels back at midnight, and, with his brain all on fire with that vitriol madness, lifts against her unprotected womanhood his cowardly and brutal hand, "till the filthy bye-lane rings to the yells of the trampled wife." Ah, I cannot go on ; and you—you cannot bear to hear of these things. Yet these things are, and worse—if there be worse—than these ; and though you may, if you please, lay a flattering unction to your conscience, and call this rhetoric, or call it exaggeration, it is just the plain, bare, hideous truth. And while you shrink from these things in words, are your sympathies so slothful that you do not shrink from them in reality ? Oh, that I could harrow up into a little manliness those delicate sensibilities ! Oh, that I could thrill through horror into action those tastes, like that of an insect, "which feels the shaking of the table, but does not feel the thunder." For it is the horrible fact that the drink which we, as a nation, are drinking, not from the necessities of thirst, but from the mere luxuries of appetite—drink often adulterated with the vilest and most maddening ingredients—yes, this rubied and Circean cup which we sip, and smile while it is converting thousands of our brethren into swine—this subtle, serpentine, insidious thing which we cherish in our bosoms, and laugh and play with its brightness, while it is stinging thousands of our brothers into raging madness—costs us, as I have shown, millions of money, myriads of criminals, thousands of paupers, thousands of ruined women, hundreds and thousands of men and women goaded by misery into suicide and madness, with every blossom in what might have been the garland of their lives blighted as by a fury's breath.

And again I say, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ?" Is it nothing to you, young men who, if you be worth anything at all, better than to cumber the barren ground of wasted and useless lives, will be called upon, a year or two hence, to take up your cross, and, the mirth and brightness of youth being ended, to take your happy and holy part where God shall place you in the ranks of the great battle between sin and death ? Shall it be nothing to you that the blood of your brothers and sisters in the great family of God is being daily poured upon the altars of this deadlier Moloch of a Tophet more awful than that of Hinnon's vale, while in discovering that you are your brother's keeper you become his Cain ? Aye, and are we to go on for another generation with our 8,500 public-houses in London

alone, and see another generation of our country's children grow up amid the same dangers and the same temptations, exposed like a defenceless prey to these evil spirits ; nay, even transmitting that awful hereditary craving which shall leave to yet another generation, for all their lives, the reality of intense temptation, the possibilities of terrible catastrophe ? Even if every one of you be indeed really safe (whereas, what I feel sure of is, that without the grace of God sought in earnest prayer not one of us is safe at any time, not one of us is safe from anything), but even if you be quite sure that you will never fall unawares in love with this tamed viper, which may seem a bright and harmless creature of God, until, as, alas ! too many of the strong and the gifted and the noble who have been wounded by it can testify, at some moment of deep misery or crushing disappointment it slides into the soul with tempting whisper, or fixes in the heart its envenomed fang ; even if you be personally safe from this destroyer of all health and virtue, this breeder of all disease and sin ;—will you do nothing for, will you think nothing of, those myriads and multitudes to whom this drink means brutality and degradation, disease and death ? If so, if you hear with callous indifference, nay, with open dislike, nay, with angry repugnance what you have heard to-day, as though forsooth some rude untutored voice broke in upon your balanced serenity, then by all means, as far as I am concerned, insult the speaker to your heart's content ; eat, drink, and be merry ; go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper. But if, indeed, you don't care to do anything, not even to lift one finger to save this England from this living death, then stand aside from among us, and do not call yourself a philanthropist ; do not call yourself a Christian. It may not be your duty—I have not said, I do not say, that it is—to take any pledge of total abstinence as the amulet of a hallowed purpose or the safeguard of a strengthened youth, or the outward sign that you too will take your part, now and hereafter, in this great struggle between heaven and hell ; but if you do not feel called upon to do this, at least respect and honour the motives of those who, in special positions, and because of special duties, think that in doing it they have obeyed their country's and their Saviour's bidding ; and that in the strength of heaven and for the sake of Christ and Christ's perishing little ones, they have been called upon to act in the spirit of the high language of St. Paul—“I will neither eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor anything whereby my brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”

G I L G A L.

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day."—JOSHUA v. 9.

"WHATSOEVER things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. xv. 4). Such is the Apostle's testimony to the use and purpose of Holy Scripture. And more particularly is this true respecting the history of the Chosen People. The marvellous incidents, the wonderful providences, the daily mercies, the oft-repeated admonitions, the manifold experiences, by which God did teach them were intended to teach us also—"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11).

At this period of Israel's journeyings they had just entered the Land of Promise, but they had not yet taken possession. They have now to go up as a militant force—to fight, to conquer, and possess. But at the very threshold of their career of conquest they are impeded in their course by an initial hindrance—they are under "the reproach of Egypt." The once bond-slaves, or the immediate descendants of the bond-slaves, of Egypt, had, by the long intermission of the sign of the Covenant of God, forfeited that full liberty, that sonship, that covenanted relationship to God, without which they could not be entitled to the fulfilment of the promises made unto their fathers. This was "the reproach" under which they laboured, and until this is removed, they are hindered in their progress, and are unequal to the performance of the human effort which is, in all such cases, required to correspond with the Divine purpose. At Gilgal the people enter afresh into covenant with God by the renewal of the rite of circumcision. Thus the reproach of Egypt is rolled away, and Gilgal becomes to the Chosen Seed a "place of liberty."*

Without entering on the probable meaning of this introductory

* Josephus, Antiq. v. 1, 4.

sacrament of the people of the Lord, which may, indeed, be variously interpreted, I desire rather to regard it in the light of that which I believe was its primary intention—its bearing upon national progress, as it is likely to be either helped or hindered by circumstances. You observe the incident is of a national character ; and if the incidents that befell individuals were intended as examples to us, as individuals, then it would seem but right to seek for an example to ourselves, as a nation, in this great national event at Gilgal. And the lesson need not be the less personal for that ; for, as all great aggregates are made up of individual parts, so here, the reproach or sin of a nation must be rolled away from each individual of that nation before the covenant of God is restored in its fulness. In what respect, then, does this incident of Israel's national history apply to ourselves as a people ?

This nation of England possesses privileges many and great, and far beyond those committed to the Chosen Race. England has a bygone history to be ever mindful of, a present greatness to be careful for, and a future destiny to be always striving after. Her religion, her commerce, her liberty, her greatness, and her undisputed glory—these all come to mind upon the suggestion of the name of this great Fatherland of ours. England sways the sceptre of the world, is the mart of nations, is the umpire of kingdoms, is the centre of religion and of the religious activities of all lands. Wherever the Gospel is truly preached, wherever the Bible is openly and freely used, wherever missionary enterprise has found success, wherever the cause of philanthropy progresses, wherever the chains of slavery have been relaxed—there is England always to be found, as the pioneer of every good word and work. If ever there was a nation, since the days of Israel of old, that had God so near to her, it is England ; and the religion of England, being that of God's revealed Word, is yet to cover all lands. Then, for the honour she enjoys, for the work she has to do, and for the true love we bear her in our heart of hearts, we desire to see whether, like Israel of old, this England of ours is under any reproach ; whether any national wrong impedes and hinders her progress ; and whether at the root of this noble tree any worm is lurking that may cause it one day to wither like the gourd of Jonah. If England is, beyond any other land, put in trust of the Gospel, why has not that Gospel made further progress ? If England is thus full of wealth and resource, why doth poverty so greatly abound ? If England is the seat of justice and equity, why is there so much wrong-doing in the land ? If England is possessed of national, social, and domestic blessings beyond those of other countries, why are there so many social and domestic evils lingering in our midst, which, notwithstanding all the social and philanthropic efforts of the day, we cannot subdue and cannot get rid of ? Has England no need of her own Gilgal, the rolling away of a reproach, before she can go up free-handed to possess the land ?

In reply to these questions, it will not suffice to tell us that there is such a thing as "human nature," and to blame on it all the woes and sorrows that befall us. This would be nothing more than one of the common-places of the mere moralist. Far be it from me to become the apologist of "human nature"; it is a principle that is responsible for its own share of the world's sin and sorrow, and the full burden of its guilt let it bear. At the same time, we surely must know that "human nature," as it is thus talked of, is but an abstraction; and that it must be assailed in its concrete and palpable forms, if any practical purpose of good is to be subserved. There was much of "human nature" in the people of Israel; and yet it was owing to certain external circumstances that were remediable, that the people were under reproach. These remediable circumstances were in due time remedied, and the reproach was accordingly rolled away. It behoves us, therefore, to examine and see whether there be not some external hindrances existing among ourselves as a nation, some palpable ways and means and instruments of evil, which operate unfavourably upon the common-weal, and stay our nation's social and religious progress, and constitute the "reproach" of England, and for the rolling away of which some Gilgal must be found.

If in this Sermon, preached at this Special Service, I single out the sin of drunkenness, and the extravagant and excessive use of strong drink in this country and its dependencies, I shall do no more than is abundantly warranted by the actual circumstances of the case. Special sermons are generally addressed to special topics. Sometimes theological subjects are thus dealt with, which all perchance cannot grasp or understand. On this occasion I select a great social topic, in the practical working of which each one here can take a part. I make this choice to-night, not only because I feel it to be a subject "wholesome and necessary for these times"; but also because the topic has been specially suggested to me as a suitable one for the present occasion. I propose to deal with some such question as this to-night—"Intemperance: its causes and consequences; its cure and remedy." In a word, it is felt that in this respect a reproach rests upon our land; we must take our stand somewhere, and in some definite form deal with it, so that it may be rolled out of the way. This would be our Gilgal, so far as this particular evil is concerned. God grant to His Church and people grace to deal faithfully with this hindrance, and to roll away the reproach utterly from our country!

But in what respect can this be said to be the reproach of England! The great drink question certainly suggests itself almost instantly to our minds, as though it had achieved an evil prominence over and above other characteristics of our land. England is characterised by her wealth, by her liberty, by her intelligence, by her commercial enterprise, as well as by many other good' y marks and tokens; but all these tend more or less to her material and moral *good*. It is

England's strong drink that impresses the dark blot, and stamps the deep reproach upon the land—drinks that are so much stronger than those of other lands or of former times, and that are used more frequently and in larger quantities in our own country than in any other land. It is to this cause we must attribute many of the diseases of the body, most of the diseases of the mind, much of the poverty of the people, the destitution of the poor, the crime of the country, the ruin of fortunes and reputations. It would be well if we could stop there; but we must add to the dread catalogue of temporal woes the greatest woe of all—the loss and ruin of immortal souls. No words of mine could tell, no representation could depict, the awful details of the ravages of this spoiler of the land, this “enemy” who comes by day and by night to sow tares amid the seed of good. It robs heaven of souls, it is the cause of the terrible doom of many of the lost, it is the most copious contributory to that fearful deluge that desolates earth with sorrow and misery. Heaven and earth and hell are, accordingly, all interested in the matter. If this, therefore, is not a subject worthy the attention of the pulpit, I know not what is.

Anything that hinders the Gospel, or that casts stumbling-blocks in the way of moral and religious progress, is a proper subject for the ministry of the Word. And I do believe that most Christian workers are prepared to admit that this is the great hindrance to their Christian work. The Sunday-school teacher finds that the early seed he has sown has proved unproductive of good, by reason of the drinking associations which have led away the once hopeful youth into the paths of the destroyer; the district visitor finds the tract unread, the good advice unheeded, the family sores unhealed, the family wrongs unmended, by reason of the strong drink; the minister finds that the Word he has preached and read, and that once promised a hopeful return, has been rendered unremunerative of any good result in so many hearts, because the drink has drowned the Word, so that it becomes unprofitable. Here is, at least, one definite cause of ill-success, fully known, recognised, and acknowledged; and yet no hand is put forth, save in an exceptional way, to remove the evil, and so to give the seed deepness of earth and other opportunities of growth and increase. Can this be called economy of Christian labour? Is not this but as the pouring of water into a sieve? It is the planting of the good seed, knowingly, amid the stones of the stony ground, amid the thorns of the thorny ground, amid the barren sands of the desert, or on the beaten track of the highway. Surely, no result can be expected from such an unforeseeing seed-time; none but a famine-crop of social want and of spiritual destitution.

It is, I firmly believe, owing to the baneful influence of drink that so many of the masses of the people are, as some vast outlying population, practically beyond the influence of the Church and of the clergy of the land. With all our effort, these deep strata of society are not reached. Our wishes, our prayers, our labours, all tend in the direction of their good; and yet in vain. The fact is, though we

are all digging, few dig deep enough. The drink is at the root of it ; and as long as this is so, we shall continue to be, as we have been,

“Dropping buckets into empty wells,
And growing old in drawing nothing up.”

And as **it** is at home, so is it also abroad. England's first mission to the heathen is not the mission of the Bible, or of the Christian faith, but of the intoxicating drink. And in this respect England, to a large extent, unfitts and disqualifies herself for becoming the evangelist of the heathen. She has taught the heathen to imitate the evil customs of the home country. The natives feel the wrong that has been imported among them, and they then turn round and, naturally enough, reproach England for the deed ; so that our land becomes a by-word among the heathen. They tell our English missionaries to go and convert their own drunken countrymen abroad, and then to come and attend to strangers. I am informed by a missionary friend from India that when the natives would imitate a Frenchman, they assume a light and fantastic gesture ; when they imitate a German, they assume a thoughtful and meditative aspect ; but when they would personify an Englishman, they mockingly reel about like a drunken man ! And this is the fame of the land that sends the Gospel to their shores ; and is not this a “reproach” that needs some Gilgal to roll it away ?

“England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of wat'ry Neptune, is now bound in with shame.
That England, which was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.”

I have lately been reading a book which has had a wide circulation in this country, entitled “Savage Africa.”* In that work the author sorely complains of the drinking propensities of his countrymen who have settled in the wilds of the great continent. He also alleges (I do not say he *proves*, but he alleges) the miscarriage and misadventure of Christian missions in Africa ; and stirs up our jealousy exceedingly by striking the sword of missionary conquest clean out of the hand of England, so far at least as Africa is concerned. He says :—“Since neither European commerce nor military protection, nor Christian missions, can civilise this country, what is to be done with it ? Is it always to remain Savage Africa ? No ; the work of progress is being accomplished, though without European aid, and though concealed from European eyes. The continent is being converted by means of a religion” (p. 518). And that “religion” is stated to be—Mohammedanism ; the religion, not of our Christ, but of the False Prophet. “His followers,” says this author, “are redeeming Africa.” The adaptation of the false religion of Mohammed to this particular mission is also maintained

* “Savage Africa.” By Winwood Reade.

—“The laws which he prescribes are perfectly suited to the African.” And one of these main principles is thus stated—“The Africans are drunkards. The Koran forbids them to touch wine or spirits.” Alas ! it is the old, old story over again, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. The Mohammedan missionaries recognise in strong drink a physical evil and a hindrance to progress. They desire to see the success of their labours ; they accordingly remove the intoxicating element altogether out of the way ; thus establishing a precautionary measure, which largely helps their progress and promotes success. We, indeed, ask for no iron *rule* of the Koran ; but we do ask for the loving *motive* of the Gospel—the removal of everything that offends, the taking away of stumbling-blocks,* the rolling away of reproach.

It is cheering and refreshing amid such sad tidings as these to hear of the large number of the clergy and other members of our Church, and our fellow-citizens of all ranks, both at home and abroad, who are endeavouring to roll away the reproach from their land. I fear we do not sufficiently estimate the full power of all those goodly influences that are put forth in this matter throughout the country ; how much we are indebted to the good advices, the godly labours, and the earnest efforts of the Church ; not to say anything of the kindly and anxious interest that is taken by so many here and there for the welfare of individuals who are suffering through the influence of drink. It may be well for us to think for a moment what the result would be if all the existing agencies for good were to be withdrawn, and the tide be allowed to flow on without meeting with the resistance that undoubtedly is presented by the numberless influences of Christian workers throughout the land. My only fear is that this is too specific an evil for any merely general influences to cope with it successfully. Matters have advanced to a crisis, to a desperate crisis, which seems to call for extraordinary effort, specially directed against the specific disease. And I rejoice to know that there are so many who are practically dealing with the question in a specific form, which, when superadded to all other efforts, is sure, with God’s blessing, to tell upon the disease by laying a vigorous hand upon the external cause of the wrong. For example, the Bishop of Columbia and many of his clergy have taken a definite stand against the ravages of this foe in that vast diocese, by their own personal abstinence even from the use of drink. Colonial and missionary clergy in all parts of the world are lifting up a practical testimony in this matter by abstaining from that little which they had been accustomed to take, and which they thought never did them any harm : their one great motive being to stand by and encourage those who, having suffered from the intoxicating cup, have resolved with God’s help to make a final break even with the occasion

* Rom. xiv. 13 (*σκάνδαλον*), a *stumbling-block*, a *trap*, a *snare* ; or, as in Matt. xviii. 7, *offence*.

to their besetting sin. Moreover, nearly 600 clergy of the Church at home,* witnessing the evils resulting from the drink in their parishes and districts, have, by the example of their own abstinence, sought to do what they could towards rolling away the reproach from their midst ; taking in hand many a once wreck and ruin caused by drink, and building them up on the better principles of sobriety, happiness, and peace, to their material and moral advantage, and to their unspeakable spiritual gain.

But these allusions to personal abstinence may seem to anticipate at too early a stage the great burden of my appeal, at least so far as the proposed prevention or cure of this great physical evil may be concerned. To this important branch of my subject, I will now, however, proceed to address myself, observing this much at starting, —that in our abstinence we advocate no spirit or practice of asceticism ; we assert to ourselves no superior virtue by reason of this form of protest ; we disclaim even that which is sometimes laid to our credit, a spirit of self-denial, seeing that this abstinence of ours has long since become by habit and custom an unconscious state of life to most of us. We desire in all humility of mind to put our hand to this plough ; and for the sake of the good that is promoted, and the evil that is prevented thereby, we would lay all honour upon this short and easy method for rolling away this “reproach” from our people and country.

I. *The nature of strong drink.* Our train of thought and reflection now starts from the nature, the intrinsic nature, of the intoxicating, drinks of our country—the *vivida vis* of strong drink. It is a spirit, and a spirit is *life*. Hence the very name of Strong Drink : it is called by this designation not because it is calculated to make the drinker strong, for it oftentimes makes him very weak, both physically and morally ; but because it is possessed of a strength *stronger than that of the drinker*. It is as a strong man armed ; and you, my brother, may be the weak one, pursued, overtaken, and overcome by it. It is stronger than man’s physical power, stronger than his bodily endurance, stronger than his moral resolution. He that sits down to trifle with the wine-cup, is enterprising an unequal conflict, and he may truly say that in the struggle he “wrestles not against flesh and blood.” Now, whenever we see an unequal conflict, the strong against the weak, the great against the small, the giant against the child, do not our sympathies at once lead us to cast in our strength on the side of the weaker one ; especially when the strong one is in the wrong, and when the might is not the right ? It is on the same

* *Note to Second Edition.*—This was the number of the Abstaining Clergy in 1867 ; it is computed that the number now (1878) would exceed 3,000, besides the vast body of the English clergy, who, with scarcely a single exception, are deeply and personally interested, as members of the Church of England Temperance Society, in the spread of Temperance, and the repression of drunkenness, throughout the length and breadth of the land. The same wide-spread interest characterises the Colonial Churches.

principle I would ask you to-night to assist your weak brother against this foe that is stronger than he. It is possible you may say, "Let him assist himself; he has but himself to blame!" Nay, say not this. Remember how insidious is the foe, and how great is its power. Remember how it begins with the taste, and is whetted into an appetite. Remember how oft it is associated with a father's good wish, or with a mother's blessing, and is thus commended as an undoubted friend rather than warned of as a possible foe. Remember, its chief danger consists in the busy activity of the life that is in it, creating its own lust, and building up its own superstructure, to the topstone of shame and the climax of disgrace. This, then, may be one of those opportunities by which you may become "your brother's keeper." Ay, cast him not off because he has fallen; Jesus did not cast us off in our deep sin; but He came, and stooped, and succoured us. So let us do to the brethren.

"Thou art not weak; thou canst refrain;
Then help to loose the captive's chain.
Be strong to bear another's load,
And lead the sinner up to God;
Stoop down to set the captive free,
As Jesus stooped to conquer thee!"

II. The tendency of strong drink. The life, the spirit, that is in the strong drink gives it its tendency. Physiological science tells us that the immediate tendency of the intoxicating element, is—direct as the arrow to the mark—to the brain-power.* This, then, adds to the solemn seriousness of the evil. What is the brain-power of man, but man's very self? This is the umpire of all his acts, the guiding power for right or wrong—helmsman, captain, compass of the soul. Now, the tendency of the intoxicating drink is to unduly affect this power of man; and thus body and soul are brought into bondage. All men are not equally affected: there are some who are constitutionally more susceptible than others; some who fall early in the field; some who tarry long at the wine; some who at the outset would say, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this?" But all the time the strong one is working his way, and affecting the brain; he is weaving his invisible threads; in too many, alas! these grow

* *Note to Second Edition.*—At the time this Sermon was delivered, medical science was feeling its way out of comparative darkness on the subject of the physical properties of alcohol. The researches and experiments of the French analysts, MM. Lallemand, Perrin, and Duroy (published in Paris, 1860), had turned the first sod of a new line of thought and discovery on this subject. These found a ready and responsive echo in the able medical works of the late Professor James Miller, M.D., of Edinburgh (1861). The discussion of the question soon spread throughout the medical profession generally, and has at last led up to the almost total revolution of medical science and treatment which so remarkably characterises the professional utterances of to-day in the Medical Schools, and medical journals, and the meetings and congresses of the British Medical Association.

to cords, and these to coils, and these are quickened into very serpents, which bind the soul in cruel bondage at the last. Strong drink is as the wily general who seeks to take the city. He scorns the mines, and parallels, and outworks, because he has the power to leap at one bound into the citadel ; and, possessing this (the brain-power), he commands all the outworks. Or, as the thief who has no need to tamper with the servants, and thus to rise to the master of the house ; strong drink lays hold on the master at once ; and possessing the master, he holds the mastery. Such is the power of that element of popular use, which is sold at the corner of every street, is introduced into every company, and constitutes the sadly mistaken bond and basis of the hospitalities of our country !

Hence, then, the double danger from the wine-cup—from its nature and from its tendency. It is not as other elements of ordinary use—not as the food we eat, which may be abused to gluttony ; nor as the dress we wear, which may be abused to vanity. These are but the *passive instruments* of evil, having no active life within them ; but the intoxicating drink is the *active agent* of the wrong, possessed as it is of a spirit, a very life. The sin of gluttony is in the eater, and not in the things eaten ; the sin of vanity is in the wearer, and not in the things worn ; but the state of drunkenness is the physical result of an external element, whose natural tendency is to the brain-power of man.

From these considerations we may well understand how valueless is the argument of some who would put the drunkard on probation, to ascertain what is Enough, what is that line of demarcation beyond which is danger, and there to stop, and proceed no further. What, I should like to know, is that part of man's constitution which is the judge of what is enough ? Is it not the brain-power ? But this is the very power that is first affected by the drink ; and as the man drinks on, this power becomes more and more affected. An appeal is made to the judging faculty, but this very power is itself impaired ; that is, the judge is prejudiced on the bench of justice, so that he cannot render true judgment in the cause.* And then this line of demarcation, too ! and how mightily is the drinker blamed because

* *Note to Second Edition.*—Here my statement, made in 1867, receives a wonderful corroboration in the medical testimony before the Committee of the House of Lords, the third volume of which is now before me. Dr. Brunton, Lecturer in *Materia Medica* in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, in answer to a question from the Archbishop of York, states the following as “the effect of alcohol” (9,269)—“We find that the highest mental powers are first affected—the judgment, for example ; the whole of the lower ones, such as imagination, being still unimpaired, or more active than before.” Herein, in fact, consists the prime danger of strong drink ; like the wreckers of olden time, the true lights are quenched, and the false and misleading ones are kindled ; and the man is drawn on, by the force of a diseased and unwholesomely-stimulated “imagination,” to do deeds of hatred and of

he does not see it. But who can ever see a dividing line in moral progress ? Who can detect the line of demarcation that separates the colours of the rainbow, where the yellow tint blends into the deep orange colour, and that deep orange colour into the deeper red ! What mind, however disciplined or practised, can tell the line of demarcation that shades off the varying sentiments of men, and separates the schools of theological opinion ? And if the human eye, aided by the most powerful lenses, cannot discern any line of demarcation in the tints of the rainbow, and the skilled theologian cannot pronounce as to where or what is the dividing line between one school of theology and another, how can we expect the dulled, darkened, blunted brain of the drinker to be able to detect that imperceptible line in his progress, at one side of which is safety, and beyond it danger ? Or, suppose he could, would it be ethically right for a man to push forward designedly to the furthest verge where he supposed that moral innocence merged into guilt and sin ?* The rainbow tints may indeed thus meet and blend ; phases of thought and opinion may shade off into each other ; but it surely can never be that moral innocence and moral guilt could ever stand in such close proximity together as that the one should merge into the other.

III.—*The causative character of strong drink.*—Seeing that it has a life, and that this life gives birth to tendencies, may we not regard this element of common beverage as a prolific *cause* of evil, a cause too truly answered by its consequences ? The recital of a simple Eastern fable will save both myself and you the necessity of many words in illustration of this branch of my subject. The fable is this :—A travelling dervish was one day pursuing his journey on one of the roads of Tartary. There suddenly appeared to him the presiding spirit or genius of the place, who thus addressed him : “O dervish !

violence to those who, if only his “judgment” were left intact, would receive his protection and love.

* This is what Dr. Chalmers, in his *Bridgewater Treatise*, calls “the balancing moment” in the process of temptation—“At each repetition would he find it more difficult to break this order, or to lay an arrest upon it, till at length, as the fruit of this wretched regimen, its unhappy patient is larded over by a power of moral evil, which possesses the whole man, and wields an irresistible or rather an unresisted ascendancy over him. But this melancholy process, leading to a vicious indulgence, may be counteracted by an opposite process of resistance, though with far greater facility at the first; yet a facility ever augmenting in proportion as the effectual resistance of temptation is persevered in. That *balancing moment*, at which pleasure would allure and conscience is urging us to refrain, may be regarded as the point of departure or divergency, whence one or other of the two processes will take their commencement.” What chance, then, has this “balancing moment” when drink has disturbed the balance, and rendered it powerless to gather itself together for action when the emergency arises, and its power of discrimination is most needed to decide as to the way in which it ought to go ?

I am commissioned by the gods to inform you, that you are destined to commit one of three great sins,—murder, adultery, or drunkenness; but, as a great favour, you are permitted to choose which of these three great sins you will commit.” The dervish, having the power of selection, now bethought with himself which of these three sins would be the most venial, the least criminal. He elected the sin of drunkenness. He drank, and was drunk accordingly; and while he was drunk, he committed the other two sins!

The fable naturally suggests its own moral, the causative character of drink; how it comes to pass that many think and say, and do and suffer, under and because of the influence of strong drink, what they would neither have thought, nor said, nor done, and certainly would not have suffered, without it. Alas! our hospitals, our lunatic asylums, our prisons, our penitentiaries, our workhouses, our ragged-schools, tell the tale too often and too truly. The thousands of unhappy wives, luckless children, and desolate homes echo back their confirmation of the truth thus told. Men degraded, women fallen, innocence lost, work neglected, wages squandered—whence come all these, or nearly all, but from the fruitful cause of drink? It unsettles the brain, and this is enough to account for all the rest. Our protest, therefore, is based upon these three reasons—1, the nature; 2, the tendency; 3, the causative character of the strong drink of our country.*

* *Note to Second Edition.*—A strong confirmation of all this is yielded by the evidence before the Lords' Committee on Intemperance, third volume. Medical testimony is largely represented in this Blue-book, and from that evidence, as the latest testimony on this topic, I desire to cull a few passing notes. On the 13th of last July (1877) Sir William Gull was examined. This distinguished physician testifies (10,033), in answer to a question from the Archbishop of York with regard to the nature of alcohol—“I do not think it is known, but I know *it is a most deleterious poison!*” And when he is asked whether he means when used in large quantities, he replies (10,034) that “*a very large number of people in society are dying, day by day, poisoned by alcohol, but not supposed to be poisoned by it.*” He had, moreover, just stated (10,009) that “*the constant use of alcohol, even in a moderate measure, was deleterious to health.*” In one exhaustive sentence (10,051) Sir William Gull sums up the following diseases as produced by alcohol—“*There is disease of the liver, which is of very common occurrence, and then from disease of the liver we get disordered conditions of the blood, and consequent upon that we get diseased kidneys; we get a diseased nervous system, we get gout, and we get diseased heart. I hardly know any more potent cause of disease than alcohol, leaving out of view the fact that it is a frequent source of crime of all descriptions.*” We are, therefore, not at all surprised to hear this further testimony (10,013)—“*I should say,*” replied Sir William, “*from my experience that it [alcohol] is the most destructive agent that we are aware of in this country.*” And again (10,014) he says, “*I think that, taking it as a whole, there is a great deal of injury done to health by the habitual use of wines in their various*

A word or two now as to the practical duties devolving upon us in respect of this matter. Here three classes of persons rise up to view. To each of these three classes I have a word to say ; and then, leaving my appeal to the judgment of each man's conscience, I have done my part. I leave the rest to God !

Firstly, Those who have already become intemperate. To these I would speak as to men in danger, that they separate themselves from the element that jeopardises both body and soul ! I would have them to begin at the beginning, and abstain from the first glass. They have proved that they cannot fight it ; then I would have them flee it. For the drunkard, nearly all agree that total abstinence is about the only remedy—a total break with that which is the occasion of his sin. I would have him to do what Paley advises in his chapter on Drunkenness *—“To make a plunge and get out.” I would have him to arm himself (again to adopt the words of Paley), “with some peremptory rule”† in this matter. I would urge him by the wise advice of Lord Bacon—“Where nature is mighty, and therefore the victory hard, the degrees had need be, first to stay and arrest nature in time ; then go less in quantity ; as if one should, in forbearing wine, come from drinking healths to a draught at a meal ; and lastly, to discontinue altogether. But if a man have the fortitude and resolution to enfranchise himself at once, that is the best ; as Ovid says, ‘He is the best avenger of the soul who has burst the bonds that gall his breast, and has suffered all at once.’‡ Neither is the ancient rule amiss, ‘To bend nature as a wand, to a contrary extreme, whereby to set it right ; understanding it where the contrary extreme is no vice.’§ I would importune him by the Divine command—“If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee,” &c., &c. (Matt. v. 29, 30.) And, above all, I would urge him to the Saviour. Having in the outer court made the sacrifice of a certain sin, I would have him to enter the inner shrine

kinds, and alcohol in its various shapes, even in so-called moderate quantities.”

* Moral Philosophy, Book iv., c. ii.

† Paley enforces this advice by the following words, which are no more than a recommendation of the modern “Pledge” of Total Abstinence—“I own myself a friend to the laying down of rules to ourselves of this sort, and rigidly abiding by them. They may be exclaimed against as stiff, but they are often salutary. Indefinite resolutions of abstemiousness are apt to yield to *extraordinary* occasions ; and *extraordinary* occasions to occur perpetually. Whereas, the stricter the rule is, the more tenacious we grow of it ; and many a man will abstain rather than break his rule, who would not easily be brought to exercise the same mortification from higher motives. Not to mention that when our rule is once known we are provided with an answer to every importunity.”—*Ibid.*

‡ Optimus ille animi vindex, laedentia pectus

Vincula qui rupit, dedoluitque semel.—*Ovid R. Amor.*

§ See Whately’s Essays on Bacon. Essay xxxviii.

to meet the Lord. Brother ! if thou art burdened, seek the Great Burden-bearer ; cast thy burden, even *this* burden, on the Lord ; and if thou dost cast it upon Him, He will not only take it, but He will also take it away, so that it shall never return to thee again ; for He is the Lamb of God that "*taketh away* the sin of the world." In Christ there is rest for the weary ; in Christ there is peace for the troubled ones ; in Christ there is rest and peace for thee ! If there be any poor drunkard here, I tell him that those words of Jesus, just now so beautifully sung in the anthem, are addressed to him, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Oh, what a burden is sin ! But there is another burden, which is light, and easy to be borne. This burden has lightened many a pilgrim upon his path. Martyrs, confessors, saints, have endured pains, and penalties, and inflictions, and sorrows, and persecutions, and even death, and yet these have all been lightened by the fact that they have borne the burden of the Lord—the easy yoke of Christ. It is such as these that can best of all sing, with heart and voice, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light." If I could but persuade some burdened soul to cast off his burden of sin to-night, and to take the yoke of Christ instead, then would my visit to this venerable Abbey be not in vain ; and I would return laden with a trophy that would be greater far than the conquests of all the Cæsars.

Secondly, Those who, warned by the examples of others, and in view of the existing temptations that beset them, desire to use all lawful means to avoid becoming intemperate in drink. To this interesting class of men I would speak in words of earnest encouragement. They have not yet been overcome, but they are weak ; they may perhaps feel a yearning thirst for drink ; they may feel this thirst growing upon them ; or they may still be innocent of any harm in this matter. Then, they do well and wisely who make up their minds at this stage to withdraw themselves from all complicity with that which has caused ruin to many, and which may, if trifled with, cause ruin to them. If they *must have* probation and discipline, then there are sure to be temptations and dangers enough besides, to contend against which will require all the grace and virtue that is in them, without courting or coveting *this* danger, which, when it once gains a hold, is a parent evil, intensifying all other sins, and bringing the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—into a deeper and more degrading bondage. It is quite certain that offences must come ; but why provoke any offence that it is in one's power to restrain ? And this *is* in our power, being not an inward principle, but an external element, which may be dealt with by the hand in removing it out of the way. To those, then, who would thus deal with it, in anticipation of possible evil, I bid a hearty God-speed to-day, for the onward stages of their journey :—

" Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin ;
 But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.
 God guard ye, and God guide ye on your way,
 Young pilgrim warriors that begin to-day ! "

Thirdly, Those who, not feeling or fearing any danger for themselves, are yet willing, for Christ's sake, to give the benefit of their example and brotherly help, that they may rescue those that are in danger, and recover them that are lost. This is, after all, the highest style of action in this matter—the self-denying effort, as possibly it may beat the first; the disinterested zeal for another's good; thus bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ!

Now, this is the point at which most men stop short, and refuse to proceed further with us. And yet, I believe that, after all, it must come to this, if any real and permanent good is to be accomplished. Beyond or besides the converting grace of God, which is, of course, the root of reformation from any evil habit, I know of scarcely any instrumentality that has more thoroughly succeeded than this—the strong holding the hand of the weak in a Christian and brotherly bond of mutual abstinence. We cannot trust to mere "respectability," for there are many, alas! of those who move in the "respectable" circles of society who are addicted to this vice. We cannot be satisfied even with the plea of "education," for this is a failing from which the most learned have not been free.* Improved dwellings for the poor have of course much to do with the proper training of the people; but even this branch of social good is no safeguard against the danger of the intoxicating cup. We have been contributing our aid and co-operation to all these expedients for the good of the people, and yet the curse of intemperance still abounds. The fact is, that not one of these is above high-water mark, and consequently they are all liable to the inrush of the tide. Yea, even the renovating power of the Gospel seems to fail us here; for either it does not reach that class of people at all, or, if it does, it fails to affect them. It is a melancholy fact that many of the ministers of religion in our land have to deplore the inefficacy of their ministry among the people, and are agreed with us that the great external influence against them is the drink. They testify that the Word does not convince, the Bible does not instruct, the Gospel does not transform, grace does not convert, and the Spirit does not sanctify, because the drink is there.

Here, then, is an ascertained element in popular use, the effect of

* The *Lancet*, the leading medical journal (July 6, 1867) states as follows:—"There are probably few observant medical men who have failed to notice a habit which has been on the increase for some years past, and which seriously threatens the moral and physical integrity of society. The growing tendency of those even whose lives are gentle, and whose minds are educated, to indulge in alcoholic stimulation, is a fact which the profession would do well to recognise and protest against."

which is to indispose the mind to good, and to unfit it for the worthy reception of the good seed of the Word. The man given to drink is as one who has fallen into a deep pit of destruction ; and we all desire to rescue him. We observe him fall ; we hear his cry for help ; lights are lowered, and ropes let down. But the very deepness of the pit causes noxious gases and exhalations to arise, which extinguish the lights as they are descending, so that the man cannot see or grasp the rope of safety. The circumstances and surroundings of the drunkard are as these noxious gases ; they extinguish the light of the Gospel, and quench the movings of the Spirit, and leave the man in his darkness and his danger. We would, therefore, seek first of all to prevent or to remove those noxious exhalations and those unfriendly vapours that are engendered by strong drink, and then we may address ourselves hopefully to the rescue. All experience testifies that the circumstances of the drunkard are altogether unfriendly to the reception of the Gospel ; that strong drink is a physical hindrance that stands between the power of the Gospel and the heart of the drunkard. It is not only the drink in itself, but it is the drinking-places, and the drinking companionships, and the other associations of drink that altogether unfit the man for any service of God, either public or private. We feel that we possess the lever that can overcome this hindrance, by removing it utterly out of the way.

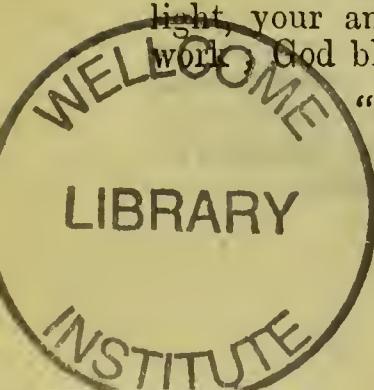
Now, may I assume that we are all agreed that the best thing for the man that is given to much drink is to make a final break with the occasion of his sin ? If so, then I ask but this one further step and my case is proved—a recognition of the power of this bond of brotherly association. If only those who are addicted to drink are to become abstainers from it, then the very fact of abstaining from drink becomes a stigma, a brand of shame, a confession of weakness. Our system would thus become a penitentiary instead of what it is, a blessed bond and association of brotherly sympathy.* Remember, these men whom we desire to rescue are in all circles of society, are in all classes of life ; and we have no right to demand, and still less reason to expect, that in this matter they would voluntarily wear the brand of past folly and excess. Now, suppose that some of us who have never been under the dominion of this snare,

* And yet, after all, is there not some sort of parallel ? What is a penitentiary ? It is a place that supplies a period of *total abstinence from the world outside*, and the peculiar dangers that some cannot control or resist. That stone wall and iron fence surrounds the sufferers and keeps off the foe. Our Temperance movement is unlike to this in only one circumstance, that it is not a penitentiary, but a blessed brotherhood, and we ourselves the wall and the railings for the protection and defence of the weak ones, and legislation (mayhap), and the strength of association together, constituting the system as a haven, a home, a resting-place to those who, without such kindly aids and brotherly helps could not continue to stand upright against the external temptations that surround them.

who have never laboured even under the suspicion of this vice, should cast in our lot with these men, and that this association should prove helpful to them in their attempt at reformation, would you not count it all honour and all joy to go in among them to help them, to strengthen them, and at last to deliver them? You would go in among them, not to fall with them into their low level of sin and shame, but to lift them up to the higher level of sobriety, with all its consequent happiness and good. Brethren, I ask you if you could enter some hospital to-day among the sick and diseased with the certainty that you would not incur their disease, but that they would partake of your health, without causing you to lose aught of your strength thereby, would you not do it? He that points the road to a wanderer, does not lose his own way thereby, but rather gains a companion on his journey. He that gives light of his own candle to another who is in darkness loses nothing of his own light thereby, but increases the light by sharing it. And this, after all, is but a copy of the Divine, Godlike, Christlike model—"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. vii. 9).

Then, if this be so, what further need I say upon the subject? If this principle is capable of being lifted up to the high level of the example and imitation of Christ, a higher grade we cannot climb, a holier motive we cannot enforce. His was the true "sympathy," a word which means, not merely *feeling for*, but *suffering with*, another's woe. And in being thus ourselves Christlike, we would also tend to lead *them* up to Christ. It would be a wholesome exercise for our Christian strength, a bracing discipline for the man of God; like the lifeboat, "drawing them out of many waters;" like the fire-escape, "pulling them out of the fire"; or as the celebrated motto of the Lighthouse, "giving light and saving life"! Here then, brethren, is a great evil to be overcome; and here a practical means for overcoming it. I speak to each man's conscience; I ask that each shall be a law unto himself. I plead the cause of slaves, I address the plea to freemen. I point you to this path for doing good, and humbly bid you enter there; and I promise you before you have gone far you will overtake some man, some life, some soul that you may save. If I do not enforce this principle as a moral *duty*, I can at least commend it as a Christian *privilege*. The whole experience of all who have tried it goes to prove what I now seek to leave as the last, and I hope lasting, impression on your minds—YOU MAY DO GOOD THEREBY! No matter what your social rank, your class of life, your degree of influence, your measure of light, your amount of talent—Go forth to labour; God speed thy work! God bless you all!

"Nor let the meanest think his lamp too dim;
In this dark world the Lord hath need of him!"



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